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POET LORE

World Literature and the Drama

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A MAGAZINE OF LETTERS

Founded in 1889 by CHARLOTTE PORTER *and* HELEN A. CLARKE

JOHN HEARD, *Editor*

EDMUND R. BROWN, *Managing Editor*

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STANZAS FROM A PROEM

By ROSE DRAKE

(*Echo*)

I sprung from dust and ashes . . . pain on pain . . .
and did a red rose bloom where I had lain . . .

Strange, sad, still Flower—what is this—
a tear?—or just your dewy lips I stoop to kiss?

I hate to see sweet summer on the wane:
Who knows the rose will bloom for him again?

Love, Star, and Flower . . . what dear cost
for dust and song of rapture I had lost!

Awhile I closed my eyes
and kneeling said,
"Stoop, *Lonely One*, to reach my hand!"
and I was not afraid.

A Hind was crippled in a flaming race
and kept her heart from breaking for a space.

Lifting her broken limbs she limped away
to hide in deep shadows for a long day . . .

(*Lament*)

I mind me of a bird with folded wing:
or wounded bird before he dies
trying to sing—

My wings shall make a shadow on the grass
of a heart torn by an arrow
. . . as you pass . . .

Lone One! Lone One! I come at last to *Thee!*
Sprung from the dust that had engendered me! . . .

GOVERNOR LENHARD

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

By Einar H. Kvaran*

Translated from the Icelandic by Jakobina Johnson

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Governor Lenhard, *Danish official*
Torfi Jonsson, *of the farm of Klofi, Sheriff of two south-county shires*
Helga, *his wife*
Ingolf, *farmer at Selfoss*
Gudny, *his daughter*
Magnus Olafson, *foster-son of Stefan Jonsson, Bishop at Skalholt*
Eystein Brandsson, *of Mork*
Jon, *farmer at Leirubakki*
Olaf, *farmer at Vatnagard*
Bjarni, *farmer at Hellur*
Freystein, *farmer at Kotstrand*
Ingrid, *widow at Hvamm*
Snjolaug, *mistress at Galtalaek*
Holm, *Governor Lenhard's right hand man*
1st, 2nd and 3rd *of* Governor Lenhard's Men
People at the Church. Governor Lenhard's Men. Torfi's Men

Time between Acts I and II, a little over two weeks. Between Acts II and III, one night; Acts III and IV, less than a day; Acts IV and V, one night.

Time: Early 16th century.
Place: Southern Iceland.

ACT I

(*In front of the dwelling house at the farm of Selfoss. The gabled fronts of the farm buildings. Mountain scenery. Two creels on*

* Dramatic rights reserved by the author.

the grassy incline. INGOLF, *seated, is sewing buckles on saddle-straps and otherwise looking over riding gear.* GUDNY *comes out and walks up to him.*)

GUDNY. Will you be cutting the hay soon, father? The dandelions' heads have turned gray with waiting.

INGOLF. I must get this trip to the market out of the way.

GUDNY. When are you going to Hafnarfjord?

INGOLF. Can't make it tomorrow. Plan on the day after.

GUDNY. Am I to go along?

INGOLF (*reluctantly*). I don't know.

GUDNY. You promised.

INGOLF. Did I?

GUDNY (*comes up to him from behind. Covers his face with her hands, stoops over and kisses his forehead*). Will the trip be less pleasant if I'm along?

INGOLF. No. (GUDNY *pauses a moment before going back to the house.*)

INGOLF. I don't know whether the neighborhood of Bessastad would be the pleasantest place for you.

GUDNY. Oh . . . you're afraid of Governor Lenhard?

INGOLF. Would you like to have that fellow get his clutches on you? People say no woman is safe.

GUDNY. Can't several of you travel in company and see one maid safely through?

INGOLF (*looking at her sideways*). You might like to have Eystein, the hero from Mork, one of that company? Especially as he is now at Laugardal.

GUDNY. No need for insinuations regarding him. But there's no concealing the fact that I'm loth to believe he would allow any one to carry off a maiden without doing something on her account.

INGOLF. It is to be hoped that he will never be required to do aught on your account . . . it would be a thankless task as far as I'm concerned.

GUDNY. Would you rather I had no defender in time of need . . . than that he should be the one?

INGOLF. The occasion need never arise unless you look for danger.

GUDNY. But suppose Governor Lenhard should pay us a visit?

INGOLF. Pay us a visit? He'll never pay us a visit . . . What should bring him here?

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GUDNY. I've heard that he plans a trip east of the mountain.

INGOLF (*rising suddenly*). Have you heard that?

GUDNY. Yes . . . I wish he would come.

INGOLF. God forgive you! . . . Are you crazy? . . . Do you wish him to come?

GUDNY. Well, I do . . . I see nothing . . . nothing but exceptionally harmless farmer folk. I haven't even seen a real robber! Don't you think I should enjoy seeing Governor Lenhard?

INGOLF. But don't you know, child, that Governor Lenhard is a terrible man? That he does with people's property just what he pleases? . . . That no woman is safe from him? . . . That it is a disgrace to Iceland that he should have been appointed governor?

GUDNY. I'm not afraid of him.

INGOLF. You don't know what you're saying, child. . . . I know that young people like to play with danger. Still, you're uncommonly reckless . . . I wish you were married. (*Pause.*)

GUDNY. I'm not thinking of marriage.

INGOLF. That may be the truth . . . and again it may not be the truth . . . Anyway, I don't understand you.

GUDNY. It *is* the truth, father.

INGOLF. Then you ought to see how foolish you are . . . more golden heads turn gray with waiting than from running a home. (*Sits down again. Short pause.*)

INGOLF. You know I stopped at Skalholt the other day?

GUDNY. Yes.

INGOLF. And that the Bishop spoke of Magnus?

GUDNY. No. How should I know that?

INGOLF. He's an excellent young man. (GUDNY *makes no answer.*) He'll be handsomely endowed by the Bishop, who loves him as his own son. (GUDNY *makes no answer.*) Don't you like him, Gudny?

GUDNY. I don't know, father.

INGOLF (*observing her*). You do know that you do not favor Eystein? (GUDNY *is silent.*) Answer me, child.

GUDNY. No, I do not know it.

INGOLF. Oh . . . (*Pause.*) Magnus will be here today.

GUDNY (*with a start*). How do you know that?

INGOLF. I spoke with him at Laugardal today. He spent the night there, and he told me he was coming.

GUDNY. Listen father . . . couldn't you let me go away? Send me on an errand? . . . I could go and tend the sheep.

INGOLF. He's coming to see *you*. You wouldn't wish to disgrace yourself by going into hiding like a criminal! (GUDNY *is silent.*) If only Eystein doesn't turn up at the same time!

GUDNY. What makes you say that?

INGOLF. He's at the parsonage. He's hired to work there this summer. He may suspect where Magnus is going. Servants know everything—always! (MAGNUS *enters from rear, in riding clothes.*)

MAGNUS. Good-day to you. (INGOLF *rises.* MAGNUS *greets him.*)

INGOLF. Are you traveling alone?

MAGNUS. Yes . . . But I met a man who's also coming this way. Eystein Brandson of Mork. He was full of arrogance—I had better finish my errand before he arrives.

INGOLF. I know your errand. You want to speak to Gudny. I'll walk along to the east of the home field. Must look for the horses . . . Ask him in, Gudny. (*Walks away.*)

GUDNY. Father! (INGOLF *does not look back.*)

GUDNY (*embarrassed*). Won't you come in?

MAGNUS. I'd rather say what I've come to say out here, in this balmy weather. I should breathe less freely indoors.

GUDNY. You're out of breath . . . won't you rest a minute?

MAGNUS. No, I can't wait. Will you walk with me in the homefield—then sit down awhile?

GUDNY (*reluctantly*). Father doesn't like to have the young grass trampled.

MAGNUS. Then we'll stay wherever you wish. Will you sit down with me out here? (*Removes his cloak and sits down on one of the creels. After a moment's hesitation* GUDNY *sits down on the other one.*)

MAGNUS. I love you very dearly, Gudny. I have always loved you dearly since first I saw you in the church at Skalholt. Waking or sleeping—you have filled my mind. Have you not known it?

GUDNY (*in a low voice*). I guessed it.

MAGNUS. I love you as the sun is loved by one confined in a

dungeon. I have never loved anyone but you. I know I can never love another . . . I know that all my good fortune rests with you. I know that I can envelope you in a lifetime of love as in a warm cloak . . . What does your heart say? Is there any hope for me? (GUDNY *looks down and is silent* . . . MAGNUS *continues, his voice uneasy yet insistent.*) Tell me what is in your heart . . . Tell me whether my sun is rising, or setting in darkness. Tell me whether the gates of heaven are opening or closing. (GUDNY *is silent.*) I know my fortune is small. But I also know that my foster father will provide for me. He has given me to understand as much.

GUDNY (*exasperated*). Don't talk of worldly wealth at such a time. May the Holy Virgin prevent that I be bought with such.

MAGNUS. Forgive me. I didn't intend to hurt you . . . I scarcely know what I'm saying. (EYSTEIN *enters from the rear. They rise suddenly on hearing his voice. He speaks emphatically and pompously.*)

EYSTEIN. I know it. I know what *you* are saying. And I know what *I* intend to say.

GUDNY. Why do you greet us so rudely?

EYSTEIN (*to* MAGNUS). I know you are trying to get into your power the woman of my heart, but I question the sincerity of your purpose.—Perchance you may shortly become a priest . . . then merely keep a mistress according to custom. But I do know that Gudny loves me, if she does not allow herself to be led or lied to.

GUDNY (*in anger*). Why do you say such things?

EYSTEIN. Because your eyes speak not falsely—and because of our trip together across Thorsmork last year. You remember the rivers were high . . . and you also remember that at my side you felt perfectly secure. I was conscious of the current of your love mingling with the perfume of fresh verdure and the sunlight of spring. You yourself declared it the loveliest day of your life.

GUDNY (*with trembling voice*). It is anything but noble to use this method of attack.

EYSTEIN. It is noble to ward off all deception. I know whom you love, if you do not allow yourself to be blinded either by others or by your own ambition and vanity. I shall prevent you from being blinded.

MAGNUS. You are overbearing, Eystein—overbearing to

the woman you pretend to love. Is she not to be allowed freedom of action or of sentiment?

EYSTEIN (*smiles defiantly*). Fiends and absurdities! The nursling of the church comes here decked out in goods extorted from the common people . . . and complains of overbearing among the lowly! Who is overbearing in this land if not the stone image at Skalholt? (MAGNUS *starts . . . whips out his sword.* GUDNY *runs between them and turns angrily on* EYSTEIN.)

GUDNY. Why do you speak thus, Eystein? Why such uncalled for disrespect for the innocent and the absent . . . and that in the presence of the man who loves him most and has received such bounty at his hands.

EYSTEIN (*moves* GUDNY *aside; to* MAGNUS *coldly*). Why not make use of your weapon? Why not attack me when I am unarmed? The risk would not be nearly so great. (*Crosses his hands on his breast. Smiles defiance.*)

MAGNUS (*sheathes his sword*). All this is base. But I will not attack you while unarmed. I have never taken advantage of anyone—and never will. My foster-father I shall not discuss with you. Your abuse does him no harm. With you I'll have no dealings. But I ask *you*, Gudny, will you not request this man to leave us in peace, that I may finish my errand with you? This is your right in your father's absence. (*Both look at* GUDNY . . . *who remains silent.*)

EYSTEIN (*lovingly*). No, you will not send me away, Gudny. I know I cannot arrange my words with such beauty and composure as the foster-son of the Bishop. But for your sake I could do anything. For your sake I could bear the hatred and contempt of men . . . and my back would not bend. For your sake I could meet the fires of Hecla . . . and death and the devil. In my mind nothing counts but you. Never will you send me away. Never will you use harsh measures against him whose only desire for the blessings of this world is to be allowed, with loving arms, to guard you all his life. (GUDNY *weeps silently.*)

MAGNUS (*studies* GUDNY *with a sympathetic look*). Shall we not both leave?

GUDNY (*looks at him gratefully*). Yes.

MAGNUS. Both of us?

GUDNY. Yes.

MAGNUS (*offering his hand*). Farewell to you. Forgive me,

if the fault is mine . . . that this has been a painful moment for you. (*To* EYSTEIN.) Are you coming my way?

EYSTEIN. We travel by different roads. (MAGNUS *looks at* GUDNY *as if to speak, but checks himself. Puts on cloak, looks at* GUDNY; *then at* EYSTEIN . . . *then leaves.*)

EYSTEIN. Shall I go also?

GUDNY (*impatiently*). Yes . . . why can't I have any peace?

EYSTEIN. Have you promised him?

GUDNY. No.

EYSTEIN. And are you never going to pledge yourself to him?

GUDNY. (*obstinately*). I'm not bound to promise or to make any statements.

EYSTEIN (*harshly*). I understand..

GUDNY. No . . . you understand nothing. And now go.

EYSTEIN. Yes, I understand thoroughly why you send me away. The cloak looks splendid. Likewise the suit. The sword bespeaks the leader. The Bishop's wealth is tempting.

GUDNY (*in angry heat*). Did you come here to insult me? He—

EYSTEIN. Yes—what about him?

GUDNY. He . . . respects my wishes . . . and he's noble and courteous.

EYSTEIN. And I? (*Derisively.*)

GUDNY. You are—

EYSTEIN. No, no, say no more. Speak no evil of me. (*Lovingly*). Later you will regret it.

GUDNY. Now go, Eystein, leave me in peace. (TORFI JONSSON *of Klofi, and* INGOLF *enter.* TORFI *greets* GUDNY; *ignores* EYSTEIN.)

TORFI. Hail, Gudny! So the Southland Sun is still here, Ingolf. It's too bad that I'm old and married.

INGOLF. There, do you hear that, Gudny. Didn't I just tell you that you should be getting married?

TORFI. Were you saying that? Don't be over-anxious, friend. When the time comes, they don't need to be told.

INGOLF. The father should decide whom his daughter is to marry. That custom has prevailed since the country was settled.

TORFI (*glancing at* EYSTEIN). Still, you don't intend to give her to any light-headed vagabond?

INGOLF. No.

GUDNY (*offended*). Isn't it rather uncalled for to discuss my marriage at present?

TORFI. Forgive me, girl. (*To* INGOLF). She has spirit—magnificent spirit. Have you thanked God for that?

INGOLF (*dryly*). No . . . I hadn't thought of that.

EYSTEIN. Did you refer to me, farmer?

TORFI (*facing* EYSTEIN). Did anyone ask a question?

EYSTEIN. I asked whether you considered me worthy of a taunting remark—although, as a neighbor, not worthy of a common greeting.

TORFI. I do not as a rule explain my speeches. People must understand or misunderstand according to their wit.

EYSTEIN. Are you afraid to back up your words, Torfi? (TORFI *gives a shrug.*)

INGOLF. You are outspoken to your superior, Eystein!

EYSTEIN. I am a free man.

TORFI (*with a derisive smile*). Yes, you still are.

EYSTEIN. You may want to put me in irons because I refused to become your servant and because I encouraged my father in holding his own against you, although he is poor.

GUDNY. I find it my duty to inform you that Eystein had an errand with me. He is my guest. Discourteous treatment of him includes me.

TORFI. Look at that spirit! Isn't she magnificent?

INGOLF (*to* TORFI). Now you will be so good as to come inside. I've got a tankard of ale. Might have a bit of mead if you should prefer it. Maybe you want a meal?

TORFI. Thanks. My servants went ahead with the pack horses—but I'll soon overtake them. (*Walks towards entrance.*)

INGOLF. You, too, Gudny.

GUDNY. Yes. (*They enter.* GUDNY *follows as far as the door.*)

EYSTEIN. Gudny!

GUDNY (*looking back*). What is it?

EYSTEIN. I must speak to you.

GUDNY (*turns and walks towards him*). Now leave me, Eystein.

INGOLF (*within*). Are you not coming, Gudny?

GUDNY (*calls*). Yes, I'm coming.

EYSTEIN. I cannot have you leave me thus. I must know what to hope for.

GUDNY. Don't you understand, Eystein, that your persistence is distasteful to me? Can you not perceive the difference between him and you?

EYSTEIN. Him? Who?

INGOLF (*within, impatiently*). Gudny!

GUDNY (*calls*). Yes; I'm coming.

EYSTEIN. A while ago you took my part against Torfi. I have not yet thanked you for that. But that was merely a bone, thrown to a dog you felt sorry for. I do not want you to feel sorry for me. I want something entirely different.

GUDNY. You are the most headstrong, unreasonable, overbearing man that I have ever met.

EYSTEIN. Maybe . . . I am as the Creator fashioned me. I realize that I am different from *him*. Now I know to whom you refer. Awhile back I had forgotten the wretch. I shall not yield my place to that Bishop's babe. Yes, you are aware of a difference; you are aware of my poverty . . . the absence of fine clothes and costly weapons. You are aware of my lowly station. But I am a bigger man than he . . . I know that this time I shall have to take no for an answer . . . I shall return in finer garb. But should you by chance think it dearly bought, be mindful of this: it will have been acquired for your sake.

GUDNY (*uneasy*). What are you going to do?

EYSTEIN. Seek my fortune . . . wheresoever the search may lead me . . . even to the depths of perdition.

INGOLF (*in the doorway; severely*). Why don't you come in when I tell you to, Gudny?

GUDNY. I'm coming now. Good-bye, Eystein. (INGOLF *and* GUDNY *disappear within.* EYSTEIN *about to leave.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *and* HOLM *enter in riding garb, meeting* EYSTEIN *as he is leaving.*)

LENHARD. Who are you, man?

EYSTEIN (*observing him*). Eystein is my name.

LENHARD. Do you belong here?

EYSTEIN. No.

LENHARD. Where do you hail from?

EYSTEIN. From Mork at Landi . . . Who may you be?

LENHARD. Don't you know me? (*Smiling*).

EYSTEIN. No . . . That's why I ask.

LENHARD (*to* HOLM). The farmer is somewhat forward.

HOLM. All Icelanders are, in the farming districts. (*Lowers his voice*). He's well known. He's the bravest man in the South country.

LENHARD (*laughs; low voice*). Then most likely he'll some day try to kill us. Still, you must tell him who I am. It may take him down a bit.

HOLM. This is the Governor from Bessastad . . . the highest official in the country . . . the King's representative. Greet him—I know he will respond graciously.

EYSTEIN. In this country it is customary for the guests to give greeting on their arrival.

LENHARD (*laughs*). He's a jewel. Say, man, what is your name again?

EYSTEIN. Eystein Brandsson.

LENHARD (*spirited*). Say, Eystein, you ought to join my band.

EYSTEIN. Why?

LENHARD. You seem a brave lad. And I don't believe you're afraid of any man. That you dare to do as you wish—No . . . you are from Landi. So of course you're afraid of Torfi from Klofi.

EYSTEIN. I?

LENHARD. Yes . . . You!

EYSTEIN. I stand in fear of no one. If I joined, what would be expected of me?

LENHARD. To follow your superior. (*Laughs.*) You would earn more with me than with the one you serve at present. You certainly could expect more advancement. (*Looks him over from head to foot.*) And your garb would be more seemly. (EYSTEIN *thinks; the others confer.*)

LENHARD. He did not get angry. That's a good sign.

HOLM. You do not expect him to join our company?

LENHARD. No. I'm no child. From him I judge the people here are not antagonistic. The brave ones are calm, and the common people are afraid, cowed, inert. That is as it should be.

HOLM. Yes, sir. The common folk are afraid. And if all that has been reported is true, that is not to be wondered at.

TORFI (*inside the farm house window.*) That vagabond is still here. Does he entertain some hopes? (*Laughs.*)

INGOLF (*also inside*). Don't say foolish things, Torfi Jonsson.

EYSTEIN (*shakes his fist in the direction of window. Evidently comes to some conclusion*). Were you in earnest, Governor?

LENHARD (*wheeling around from conversation with* HOLM . . . *ignorant of what has taken place*). In earnest? About what?

EYSTEIN. I might offer to become your man if you were serious about it. (LENHARD *and* HOLM *exchange glances.*)

LENHARD. Are *you* in earnest?

EYSTEIN. Yes. (*Pause.*)

LENHARD. Tell me, Eystein . . . how much have you stolen?

EYSTEIN. I? . . . Stolen?

LENHARD. Yes. Is it money . . . or sheep . . . or . . . ?

EYSTEIN. I . . . stolen . . . money or sheep?

LENHARD. I'm not asking for the purpose of holding an investigation. I am a lenient governor. But I enjoy knowing for certain how things stand with my men.

EYSTEIN. I have stolen nothing.

LENHARD. Perhaps you have been overbold in regard to some woman? (LENHARD *and* HOLM *laugh.*) Many a good man has been guilty of that. There are said to be many pretty wenches hereabouts.

EYSTEIN. I have not been overbold in regard to women.

LENHARD. Maybe killed a man?

EYSTEIN. No man has died at my hands.

LENHARD. No, not killed. But shaken up . . . or you handled him so as to lay him up for a few days? You're husky and likely to do big things. I'm not hard on such occurrences.

EYSTEIN. I have done no harm to anyone.

LENHARD. You're frank.

EYSTEIN. That I am.

LENHARD. Will you be frank with me?

EYSTEIN. Yes.

LENHARD. Tell me then . . . what have you done?

EYSTEIN. Done?

LENHARD. How did you happen to bump into this infernal system known as the law of the land?

EYSTEIN. I have broken no laws.

LENHARD (*eyeing him*). This is the strangest case I've come across lately. (*Laughs.*) Is it not so, Holm?

HOLM. Yes, sir.

EYSTEIN (*put out*). What is there to laugh at about me?

LENHARD. Nothing . . . bless you . . . nothing.

EYSTEIN. Why did you ask me those peculiar questions?

LENHARD. For my own pleasure. It's like this . . . The Icelanders who have lately offered to serve me . . . but we'll drop that matter. You are my man, then?

EYSTEIN. Yes. (TORFI, INGOLF, GUDNY *step out of the house.* TORFI *is taken aback at the sight of* GOVERNOR LENHARD.)

TORFI (*aside to* INGOLF). The Governor . . . here?

INGOLF (*aside also*). God be with us!

GUDNY (*aside to* TORFI). Is this Governor Lenhard? (TORFI *nods assent.*)

TORFI. Greetings, Governor!

LENHARD. Greetings, Sheriff!

TORFI. You are a rare visitor in this East section.

LENHARD. Yes, I am looking over this land I rule.

TORFI. Yes . . . the land you rule. How do you like it?

LENHARD. The grass grows tall in this east quarter.

TORFI. And the people?

LENHARD. I hope they will prove obedient and submissive to the King's representative . . . both the common people and the leaders.

TORFI. The common people and the leaders will prove obedient to all lawful proceedings.

LENHARD. Is that a thrust at me, Sheriff?

TORFI (*faint smile*). How can the governor imagine such a thing?

LENHARD (*sharply*). We'll meet later, Sheriff.

TORFI (*with polite sneer*). That will afford me extreme pleasure, and do me great honor.

LENHARD (*to* INGOLF). Are you the farmer here?

INGOLF. Yes.

LENHARD (*indicating* GUDNY). And this is your daughter?

INGOLF. Yes.

LENHARD (*appraising* GUDNY). You should grace the palaces of the noble and not an Icelandic turf-hut.

INGOLF (*starts. In a low voice to* GUDNY). Go into the house. (*She goes but is seen peeping through the doorway.*)

TORFI (*to Eystein*). So you're still here, Eystein? The servants of the priest at Laugardal appear to have ample leisure.

LENHARD. The sheriff need not concern himself over the employment of *my* men.

TORFI. What?

LENHARD (*again facing him*). Did you speak, Sheriff?

TORFI. I do not understand you, Governor. Is Eystein . . . ?

LENHARD. Eystein is one of my servants . . . my man.

TORFI AND INGOLF. Eystein?

LENHARD. Anything out of the ordinary about that?

INGOLF. Eystein gone over to the forces of Governor Lenhard!

LENHARD. Well . . . what of it?

TORFI. Since you ask, Governor, we Icelanders do not consider that a rise in the world.

LENHARD. And you dare say that to the face of the King's representative?

TORFI. Would I had the opportunity to tell it to the King himself.

GUDNY (*running out, to* EYSTEIN). Is it so, Eystein? Say it's a lie that you've joined the forces of Governor Lenhard. Speak!

EYSTEIN. It is true.

GUDNY. So on the same day on which you ask for my hand you betray your country—become a traitor.

CURTAIN

ACT II.

(*At* KLOFI, *outside. Church and church yard with lichgate to left. Mountain scenery. Singing is heard from church. Then the bell is rung.* TORFI *and* HELGA *sitting on bench, listening.*)

HELGA. The people will soon be coming out.

TORFI. Yes.

HELGA. The news is bad.

TORFI. It may be exaggerated or more or less unreliable. I have not spoken to anyone from Arnes yet.

HELGA. Some of them are here. Ingolf of Selfoss at least, and one or more along with him. I think that they intend to confer with you after church.

TORFI. I suppose so.

HELGA. What will you do?

TORFI. What I intend to do? I can't tell until I know what others have done.

HELGA. Your great uncle, Thorvard, would not have hesitated.

TORFI. You're wonderful, Helga. As usual you would like to see the governor, the King's representative, captured and thrown in a sack into White River.

HELGA. I didn't say so. But that is exactly what your great uncle dared do to Jan Gerrksson for his deeds of oppression and crime, and J. G. was a Bishop.

TORFI (*musing*). Dared . . . ? There are one or two things I dare, Helga.

HELGA. Yes—yes—yes! I know it, my dear. But why always conceal your plans so carefully? You might safely confide in me. (*Enter from church* INGRID *of Hvamm*, SNJOLAUG *of Galtalaek*, OLAF *of Vatnagard*, BJARNI *of Hellum and others.*)

SNJOLAUG. You were not in church, Sheriff?

TORFI. No.

OLAF (*low voice to* SNJOLAUG). He very likely thinks the priest sides openly with the Bishop.

SNJOLAUG (*out loud*). Still it is bad form to stay away from service. (TORFI *shrugs his shoulders and smiles.*)

SNJOLAUG (*excited*). If nothing is done now, then . . .

TORFI. Then what?

SNJOLAUG. Then . . . then I don't know why any of us hold office.

JON (*clears his throat*). I just thought I'd say a few words.

TORFI. Well, what were you going to say?

JON (*clears throat*). Not much; merely that I felt the same way as Snjolaug of Galtalaek.

VOICE FROM CROWD (*derisive*). Hear, Hear . . . (*Followed by laughter.*)

SNJOLAUG. I can't help saying it—I think—but it may not matter much what I think—but I think our leaders do not count for much, if we are to be continually robbed, disgraced, and killed in masses and Icelanders are to be rooted out of Iceland.

SEVERAL. Hear! Hear!

JON (*clears his throat*). I agree with Snjolaug.

TORFI. Snjolaug, have you any knowledge of what has taken place?

SNJOLAUG. Have *I* any knowledge of it?

TORFI. Yes. I mean do you know of any specific instances?

SNJOLAUG. No. How should I?

JON. Yes—how should she know?

TORFI. No. I thought as much.

SNOLAUG. Then why did you ask?

TORFI. Because it occurred to me it might be fair to wait until we could get information as to what had taken place—until we could be certain why you are so excited, Snjolaug . . . and others too.

JON. That's right and I agree with the Sheriff. (INGOLF *and* FREYSTEIN *of Kotstrand enter from the church; they greet* TORFI *and his wife.*)

TORFI. What news do you bring?

INGOLF. Yes, too much. We are here on behalf of the people of our county, to confer with you, Torfi Jonsson, as our sheriff and leader. My companion, Freystein of Kotstrand, reports especial raids upon the farmers of the Olfus, and we of the Floi know what is coming, for O'fus River will not hold Governor Lenhard in check very long. Neither will Thors River. Hence this is a question of public safety. I should not have dared leave my home except for the hope that peace will reign over the Sabbath. On the other hand, some one has to go. All are in equal peril. I must reach home tonight—and I dared not leave my daughter, Gudny, behind. She's waiting for me at a neighboring farm.

HELGA. Why didn't you bring her here? You know how fond I am of her, Ingolf.

INGOLF. She wasn't well, and I wanted her to rest.

TORFI. What has happened?

INGOLF (*Smiles*) You tell, Freystein. The outrages took place in your county.

FREYSTEIN. No, you speak, Ingolf. You know these things as well as I do.

INGOLF. Well, then, I'll be brief, so as not to delay all these people too much. I shall take up matters of detail with you later, Sheriff.

Briefly speaking, matters stand thus . . . Governor Lenhard has taken up quarters at Arnarbali with a force of men. Flocks of sheep from neighboring farms have been driven thither and slaughtered. Cows are taken from pasture or barn. Horses are stolen wherever found. If by chance the owners are riding

them, they are thrown out of the saddle, and then these highway robbers dash away on the stolen mounts. If any who were raided tried to hold onto their livestock, they were compelled to pay exorbitant fines. Few have been able to do so. And in addition to this, many have been maltreated. (*Speaks low and with emphasis.*)

But these matters are trivial and of small import compared with others—neither to be related or listened to—without the highest degree of indignation and repugnance. Women have been maltreated, housewives and young maidens, in their homes or on the highways. These are the tidings that we bring to our sheriff and leader.

SNJOLAUG. Haven't you heard enough, Sheriff?

INGOLF. My companion, Freystein of Kotstrand, is one of those whom this rowdy gang has visited. He will tell what took place.

SEVERAL VOICES. Aye . . . aye . . . Let Freystein tell!

FREYSTEIN. First I was beaten. (*Pauses.*)

TORFI. Well, where were you?

FREYSTEIN. In bed. (*Pauses.*)

TORFI. Well . . . ? Don't make me extract each word as if I were pulling your teeth, man. Were you alone in bed?

FREYSTEIN. No.

TORFI. Who else was there?

FREYSTEIN. My wife.

TORFI. What did they do besides beat you while you were in bed?

FREYSTEIN. They bound me. (*Pause.*)

TORFI. What else?

FREYSTEIN. They took away one of my cows.

TORFI. Where to?

FREYSTEIN. To Arnarbali—stole it. Robbed me of it. And one of my best pieces of rope along with it.

TORFI. Rope . . . ? What did they want with a rope?

FREYSTEIN. Muzzled the cow with it. I wouldn't have said anything if they had taken something of less value!

INGOLF. But listen, Freystein, did they maltreat your wife?

FREYSTEIN. Yes . . . I should say so. I had almost forgotten. (*People exchange glances; some laugh.*)

TORFI. Is that so . . . Well, it was fortunate you did not quite forget that, Freystein.

FREYSTEIN. Yes.

TORFI. What about your wife?

FREYSTEIN. She screamed and yelled, but it didn't help her.

TORFI. Hmmmm. Yes, I understand, you were going to forget that part of it. A man can't keep all these matters in his head at once.

FREYSTEIN. No . . . (*Laughter.*)

SNJOLAUG. It seems to me there are other things to be done than to stand here laughing. For shame!

FREYSTEIN. I demand payment for the cow . . . or I want her back if she hasn't been slaughtered . . . and also the rope.

TORFI. What are your plans now, Ingolf, and you, men of Arnes?

INGOLF. We wish to abide by the resolutions drawn up at Ashildarmyri seven years ago. We there resolved not to tolerate any injustice from outsiders, imposed on young or old, rich or poor. We resolved never to drop such cases until full reparation had been made to the one who had suffered. We anticipated that our vengeance would at times be heavier than the case warranted, and for such we agreed to make joint repairs. But this time such a provision is unnecessary. The case is such that our revenge could not possibly overbalance it. And to right our wrongs we ask for the leadership of our Sheriff.

OLAF. You do not intend to march against the governor with an army do you?

SNJOLAUG. Why not?

OLAF. But if there was an accident?

TORFI. Accident?

OLAF. Yes. Bloodshed. Manslaughter. That's apt to happen if you go to fighting.

TORFI. Yes. Certainly.

OLAF. We ought to use some judgment.

HELGA. Is it good judgment to tolerate such violence from the Tyrant?

SNJOLAUG. Are you afraid, Olaf?

SEVERAL. He's afraid! The champion! (*Laughter.*)

TORFI. As far as I can see, we're all afraid of somthing; the difference lies merely in what we fear. Is it not fair that Olaf be given a chance to explain his ideas without insulting him?

Olaf. We pray in church. We pray to be forgiven our debts as we forgive our debtors. We ring bells in token of peace to all. And now we plan to kill. Is that right?

Jon. Well spoken. And I agree.

Torfi. So do I.

Helga (*with a start*). What are you saying, Torfi? Is the other aspect of the case not ungodly? Leaving defenseless women to the mercy of scoundrels?

Torfi. Yes.

Snjolaug. Now *I* give up.

Torfi. Both those ideas are ungodly. All our thoughts and acts are more or less ungodly. Such are our surroundings. The church is ungodly. The upper classes are ungodly. The common people are ungodly . . . And the Danes are ungodly.

Snjolaug (*emphatically*). And they are the most ungodly of all.

Excited Voices. Hear! Hear! Hear!

Torfi. I don't deny that. But you must see, that such is unavoidably all our existence. The only redeeming feature is that we try to be *men*.

Jon. That's right. I agree with the Sheriff.

Ingolf. Awhile ago we spoke of fear. Yes, there's no denying that people have been afraid in the Arnes district. They have not dared stay in their homes and yet dared not leave them. People have been afraid to lie down to sleep, and yet been afraid to sit up. But now this apathy of agonizing fear is waning. Men are now prepared to follow their official leader wheresoever he leads. Dastardly deeds have acted on them like the whetstone on a scythe—fitted them for action. Those deeds have been as spearpoints, wounding their very souls, till they clamor for vengeance . . . The Arnes people know that they are not the only ones in danger. Hence they look for help from the east side of Thors River. But most especially from their official head. (*Pause. All watch* Torfi.)

Helga. Torfi! Do you intend to let the women here assembledl eave in fear of one of these visits? Do you intend to have one of them take me some fine day? . . . When you're absent? (Torfi *remains silent.*)

Bjarni. We need weapons. We need leadership. We're ready for anything.

Voices. Aye. Aye. Aye.

BJARNI. We demand leadership. We will not tolerate the Danes east of Thors River. The official head in the South will have to take the blame if they confiscate our goods and disgrace our women as they have done in the Arnes district.

SNJOLAUG. God be praised for you, Bjarni!

HELGA (*with offended pride, eyeing* TORFI). The official head in the South shall not bear the blame for anything.

BJARNI. Good! And I shall follow him.

HELGA. You? . . . You are an old man, Bjarni.

BJARNI. No.

HELGA. Aren't you seventy and over?

BJARNI. Yes. But my father lived to be a hundred.

HELGA. Still, younger men are better for such an expedition.

BJARNI. Yes. I didn't suppose they'd let me go alone.

SNJOLAUG. Well, hardly . . . What do you think, Sheriff?

BJARNI. And they can leave me behind if I cannot keep up with them. And they need not trouble to save me if they hear me asking for mercy from the Danes.

VOICES. Hear! Hear! (*Clapping.*)

INGRID. My sons are away today. They are trying to bring in the hay after all this rain. But they wished me to say that they would support whatever action might be taken.

HELGA. Do *you* wish them to go, Ingrid?

INGRID. Yes.

HELGA. It will be dangerous work.

INGRID. I know it.

HELGA. You are an old woman.

INGRID. Yes . . . eighty.

HELGA. And you are poor. And have no others to provide for you.

INGRID. The Lord will provide for me. It will not be for long. I shan't be this side of the grave much longer. I'd rather have both my sons fall, than have the Danes as unprepared as the people of the Arnes District. (*This brings joy.* HELGA *goes up to her and kisses her. The women surround her joyously.*)

TORFI (*mounts to the bench*). This is indeed a glorious day. I've seldom known the mountains so appealingly Icelandic as today.

I thank you for coming, men and women . . . especially the women. I've been waiting . . . waiting to

hear your ideas on this difficult matter. The officials of our country cannot hope to oppose the King's representative, unless the people are determined to do so. I might have known how you would respond. Though many things have changed since the times we all mourn . . . yet the Icelandic spirit remains unchanged. A people with fathers and mothers like Bjarni of Hellur and Ingrid of Hvamm and their likes, can be counted on.

The hour has come when I can tell you that I'm ready. (*Smiles towards* HELGA.) Some have waited impatiently to hear my decision. They might have known that I would not hold back.

VOICES. Hear! Hear! Hear!

SNJOLAUG (*happy*). What have you to say *now*, Jon?

JON. I agree. I always agree.

SNJOLAUG. What do you propose to do now, Olaf?

OLAF. Does it concern you in the least, Snjolaug? Will it not suffice that I take that matter up with the Sheriff?

SNJOLAUG. I'm interested to know . . . especially as you are my neighbor.

OLAF. I might decide not to be the only one to hold back.

SNJOLAUG (*happy*). So you're going?

OLAF. Yes.

VOICE. What if it's ungodly, Olaf?

OLAF. If it should imperil my soul . . . I would be sharing the fate of the rest of you.

HELGA. That was well spoken. May I take your hand, Olaf? (*They clasp.*)

TORFI. I know you will join us, Freystein.

FREYSTEIN. What? . . . I . . . ?

TORFI. Yes. I can imagine that you want to be revenged.

FREYSTEIN. I . . . ?

TORFI. So these are your colors?

FREYSTEIN. What?

TORFI. At least you'll have to come along to identify your cow. I can't do that.

FREYSTEIN. No, I suppose you couldn't.

TORFI. And the rope. I couldn't recognize that.

FREYSTEIN. No . . . I really must get that rope back.

TORFI. Yes. There you see. Will you join in the attack?

FREYSTEIN. I . . . ?

TORFI. Yes . . . you!

FREYSTEIN. Do you consider it necessary? I could come later to identify the cow and the rope.

TORFI. Think there's anyone who has better reasons for being with us from the beginning?

FREYSTEIN. Will it be dangerous?

TORFI. Yes. (*Laughs.*)

FREYSTEIN. They might kill me?

TORFI. Yes, they might.

FREYSTEIN. Yes. Exactly. I expected it.

TORFI. What?

FREYSTEIN. What. . . ? Well, when I have already been bound, then beaten, then my cow stolen . . . then my rope stolen . . .

TORFI. Yes . . . And your wife maltreated.

FREYSTEIN. Yes . . . exactly . . . I had almost forgotten that . . . My wife maltreated also . . .

TORFI. Yes . . . Then what?

FREYSTEIN. Then, I think I am sort of being abused, if I am to be *killed* into the bargain. (*Laughter.*)

TORFI (*aside to* HELGA). It makes me feel like taking back some of my speech.

HELGA (*Speaks in a low voice*). No! Retract nothing. Every word of it was true. Of course some are born big, and others small. I mean their spirit. They can't help it. And he is . . .

TORFI (*low voice*). Yes, I see what *he* is like.

HELGA (*low voice*). Don't think of him, just remember his wife. She suffered such abuse as any Icelandic official is in duty bound to avenge.

TORFI (*shrugs*). Well!

HELGA (*out loud*). But listen, Torfi, what do you expect to do with Governor Lenhard?

TORFI (*to* HELGA, *smiling*). All things must wait their turn.

OLAF. Yes, I admit that I'm very curious to know what you intend to do with the governor.

HELGA. Is he to die . . . ?

OLAF. No . . . I know you would not do that. It would not be good judgment.

TORFI (*smiling*). Now come into my house, all of you. The wife has prepared a tankard of strong ale for all of you.

CURTAIN

ACT III

(*The stage is set as in the first act.* INGOLF *sits on a rock, which serves the purpose of a mounting-block and a hitching-post. He is holding a rake and seems to be in deep thought.* GUDNY *comes out and picks up a rake by the door.*)

GUDNY. Shall we begin raking the hay?

INGOLF. Yes, presently. It is safe to let it dry in the sun a while yet. Aren't you sleepy?

GUDNY. No.

INGOLF. You must be worn out from loss of sleep, traveling last night. Don't worry about the hay today. There are servants enough. Lie down awhile!

GUDNY. No, father, I can't sleep.

INGOLF (*rises, observes her*). Are you worried?

GUDNY. Oh, no.

INGOLF. I seem to see fear in your eyes—and seem to hear fear in your voice.

GUDNY (*smiling*). My fear is not so poetic. (*Pause*). I suppose Torfi will be getting here soon. Don't you think we can look for him tonight?

INGOLF. I don't know. Probably not. It would mean that he spent last night in gathering his forces together. But he said nothing to that effect. I know him. He wants to come as a thief in the night. He doesn't want his plans to travel ahead of him—they might travel too far. He's sensible in this as in other matters.

GUDNY. But if Governor Lenhard should get here ahead of him? (*Pause.*) That would be terrible.

INGOLF (*feigning security—but with fear in his voice*). Then we should have to receive him.

GUDNY (*shudders*). Receive him?

INGOLF. Yes. The weaker party must bide his time—bide till power swings his way. I might be poorer for the visit of the governor . . . if such disaster should befall us. But that must be borne. I am no whimperer.

GUDNY. Tell me, father, what fate has the sheriff planned . . . for Governor Lenhard?

INGOLF. I don't know.

GUDNY. How is that? Hasn't it been discussed? Or don't you think it important?

INGOLF. I said a while ago that the sheriff keeps his plans to himself. When they are most important, and he has made up his mind, he lets you think he has no plans. He lets others express their opinions. He pretends to be looking for advice from every one else. I know his methods. This time it is plainly necessary to be silent. If he told his plans, there would be dissensions before he set out. Whatever he planned would cause disagreement, if everyone began to have a hand in it, before anything was done. He might even be uncertain of a sufficient following.

GUDNY. But what do you think will be the fate of Governor Lenhard?

INGOLF. I'll tell you what I hope it will be. I hope he will be killed.

GUDNY (*hesitant*). But . . . What of his men?

INGOLF. I don't know. I imagine they w ll be put aboard a vessel and sent back to the king. Excepting Eystein of course. (*Pause.*)

GUDNY. And what will become of Eystein?

INGOLF. I don't know. (*Pause.*) I hope he will be killed.

GUDNY (*in fear*). Killed?

INGOLF. Yes. A battle is sure to be fought. Governor Lenhard is not likely to give up without a trial of strength. Then you must understand, someone is likely to fall. It wouldn't be much of a battle if no one fell in it.

GUDNY. Why do you especially want it to be Eystein?

INGOLF. Because it would be the best thing for him.

GUDNY. Why?

INGOLF. He's guilty of crime. He would be punished more severely than a man of his spirit could bear. If not killed outright.

GUDNY (*excited*). That's not true, father. He has done nothing unlawful. No one has reported any misdeeds at his hands. He has not robbed anyone or maltreated women. He is not responsible for the deeds of Governor Lenhard . . . or those he orders done by others. (*Pause.* INGOLF *regards her closely.*)

INGOLF. He has joined the ranks of Governor Lenhard. He has taken part in lawless expeditions. Torfi was no friend of his before. Now he regards him as an impostor and a traitor. Can't you imagine what will happen?

GUDNY. But that would be unjust and dastardly!

INGOLF. What do you, you child, understand about official decisions? I hope you no longer sympathize with Eystein. Such blindness! But you may be sure there will be no escape for him—unless he joined Torfi's ranks before the battle. He might do that. (*Pause.* GUDNY *muses sadly.*)

INGOLF. Well, we must begin getting in the hay.

GUDNY. I suppose so. (INGOLF *is about to start.* GUDNY *is still in deep thought.* EYSTEIN *comes running in. Well dressed.* GUDNY'S *expression hardens.*)

EYSTEIN. Governor Lenhard has arrived, with a lot of men. They dismounted outside the courtyard and may be here any moment.

INGOLF (*heavily*). You come in good company, Eystein!

GUDNY (*looks him over from head to foot*). I suppose you feel you have earned the uniform!

EYSTEIN. There are more important matters at hand now, than abusing me. Governor Lenhard must not see you. He saw you on his last visit . . . and now he *wants* to see you. Go away, for God's sake. Hide in some safe place.

INGOLF (*more obstinate and furious at every breath*). We do not speak to followers of the Danes . . . deserters and traitors.

EYSTEIN. Your father is crazy, Gudny. Hide for my sake. Come with me, we'll find some hiding place.

GUDNY. For your sake I will do nothing . . . never . . . forever. I stay here beside my father. He will see me through this, not you. (*She moves over beside her father. They look at* EYSTEIN, GOVERNOR LENHARD *enters with ten men, among them* HOLM. GUDNY, *frightened, rushes into the house.*)

LENHARD. Greetings, farmer! (INGOLF *is silent.*) A good day for drying hay. (*Silence.*) This is a large home-field. How many cows have you? (INGOLF *remains silent.*) (*To* EYSTEIN.) Is this dog deaf?

EYSTEIN. No.

LENHARD. What became of the wench I saw with you? Wasn't she his daughter? Fetch her, Eystein.

EYSTEIN. May I have a word with you, Sir?

LENHARD. Yes, speak your mind.

EYSTEIN. May I speak with you alone?

LENHARD. Yes. Leave us, farmer. (INGOLF *does not move.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *signals to his men.*) Take the fellow away! (INGOLF *is dragged out.*)

EYSTEIN (*brave, yet courteous*). You will commit no outrage here, sir.

LENHARD. I commit no outrages. I ride afeasting like the Kings of old. I am as good as your King. It is easier on the farmers to allow me to carry off a few things to Arnarbali, than to entertain my whole company for days at a time.

EYSTEIN. They look on it as highway robbery. For, of course, it is all lawless. It causes hatred. I know the people. They don't forget insults. They harbor them for centuries, and their reminiscences and stories enhance and multiply them. Look at this farmer. He doesn't say a word . . . but if you could get at his mind, you would find it seething.

LENHARD. You're a clear-headed fellow, Eystein. Still you don't understand me. And you don't understand how it is with your own people either. You see, the triangle of authority in this country . . . Church . . . Secular . . . and Danish. None other exists. Two angles of the triangle are about to be obliterated. The Spiritual authority is no longer spiritual . . . and is hated for being overbearing and avaricious. The secular authorities hate the spiritual authorities, but fear them, lack self confidence and are corrupt. This state of affairs cannot continue.

EYSTEIN. Let us be frank, sir . . . but reticent about the corruption and overbearing of others.

LENHARD (*shrugs laughing*). Of course we are no angels . . . or else we are fallen ones.

EYSTEIN. Well, perhaps.

LENHARD. But we are backed by a great and trusting people. We are the self-appointed rulers when your authorities shall have annihilated each other. Some one must exercise authority over the common people.

EYSTEIN. It will be hard rowing for you, sir, to convince the Icelanders that the Danes are born to be their rulers.

LENHARD. They must learn to understand it. I know it does no good to *tell* them so. Moreover, *I'm* not cut out for the ludicrous role of attracting the lowdown rabble by long and silken speeches as your traditional leaders of old used to do. (*Laughs.*) The Icelanders must be made to *feel* this. The runes must be cut into their hides! I'm teaching them.

EYSTEIN (*with rising heat*). You have a way of using words that sting us Icelanders like red hot irons. But I am greatly mistaken if they will not convince you of the fact that they are of

a different opinion . . . and it might prove unwise to trust to the idea that spiritual and secular authorities are at drawn daggers when it comes to dealing with you.

LENHARD (*derisive but with rising anger*). Is my hero in despair?

EYSTEIN (*controls himself*). Don't laugh at me until you've proved me a coward! But if my words carry any weight with you, refrain from robbery in this instance.

LENHARD. I must speak with the farmer. Call him back.

EYSTEIN (*waves and calls*). Come here. (*Men bring* INGOLF.)

LENHARD. You are reported wealthy. Have you any wine? (INGOLF *is silent.*)

EYSTEIN. Common farmers have no wine.

LENHARD. Have you any ale, then? (INGOLF *is silent.*)

EYSTEIN. Neither have they any ale.

LENHARD. The dog must be made to answer. (*Beckons to his men.*) Teach him to answer his superiors.

EYSTEIN (*runs between them. Stations himself in front of* INGOLF *and draws his sword*). Any one who seeks to harm this man has me to reckon with. (*The men are taken aback.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *stands a moment in silent wonder.*)

HOLM. Don't fight with your own men, sir. They may not prove too many ere the finish. (*All are still.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *thinks a moment, looking at* EYSTEIN *and* HOLM *by turns.*)

LENHARD (*shrugs with displeasure*). You are children. You are old women, all of you. But punishment can wait. (*Exit* GOVERNOR LENHARD *in deep thought. The group around* INGOLF *disperses.* LENHARD'S *men converse—then follow him out one by one leaving* EYSTEIN *and* INGOLF *alone.*)

INGOLF (*eyeing him in not unfriendly wonder*). You're a brave man, Eystein. How could you . . .

EYSTEIN. I know what is on your mind. We will not discuss that this time. I was out of my senses, I did not know what I was getting into.

INGOLF. But now you know it. Why don't you leave this disreputable company?

EYSTEIN. It's too late now, and things must take their course.

INGOLF. No. It is not too late . . . if you do not delay. Why do you not organize a band of your own . . .

lead them . . . and kill these dastards? I will help you, if you do not delay.

EYSTEIN. Torfi of Klofi will do that.

INGOLF (*with a start*). Why do you say that? Do you know his plans?

EYSTEIN. No. But I feel certain he will.

INGOLF. If it turns out that way, you only need join him.

EYSTEIN. No more of this at present. Hurry in and see that Gudny is safely hidden away. You have ample reason for blaming me . . . so have all the Icelanders. But this advice is given in all sincerity. My words carry some weight with the governor—but especially with his men, as you have seen. But you may be sure that as long as he lives, he will never give up a young woman he covets. Make haste! (INGOLF *hastens into the house.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *enters; sees him disappear—smiles derisively; turns to* EYSTEIN.)

LENHARD. We're off. We're bound for home.

EYSTEIN (*surprised*). What? . . . Excuse me. What were you saying, sir?

LENHARD. I said we were bound for home at once. I am doing it for your sake, Eystein.

EYSTEIN (*relieved*). I'm very grateful, sir . . . very grateful.

LENHARD. I have been planning for the future. You are doubtless in the right. We will change our tactics completely. We will treat the Icelanders kindly. We will make peace with all of them.

EYSTEIN (*wondering . . . hesitant*). How . . . How is it sir, that this has never occurred to you before?

LENHARD. You spoke up bravely and rationally awhile ago. I became convinced. Don't you understand?

EYSTEIN. But I have told you the same things before.

LENHARD (*abrupt*). Oh . . . aren't you satisfied with my new tactics? I can readily change my course again.

EYSTEIN. No, sir. I was too relieved and too glad to grasp it at once.

LENHARD. Well and good . . . But you are a good friend of the priest at Laugardal.

EYSTEIN. Yes . . . What?

LENHARD. He is much esteemed and kindly disposed. I wish to talk with him. I wish to get him to act as an envoy of

peace between me and the country's officials. Go and arrange the matter.

EYSTEIN. Shall I not first accompany you home?

LENHARD. No . . . we shall ride together past the home-meadow . . . then the roads divide. The ferry is close at hand. We shall find our way there. Once across the river we all know the way. I wish you to go to Laugardal without delay and ask the priest to come to Arnarbali in three days. He shall be well received. And you will witness our parley. (*Laughs.*) You shall be the chief peacemaker. Your illustrious name will go down in history. Call the men . . . we are starting.

EYSTEIN (*calls in direction of home-field*). This way, men. (*To* LENHARD) May I take leave of the farmer?

LENHARD (*laughing*). By all means! Bid him farewell! Kiss him! Embrace him! But see that you do not take too long to kiss his daughter. (EYSTEIN *goes into the house.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *follows him with his eyes, laughing heartily. The men appear.*)

LENHARD. We leave.

HOLM. Immediately, Sir?

LENHARD. Yes.

HOLM (*relieved*). Good!

LENHARD (*slyly*). But we shall return.

HOLM (*astounded*). What would bring us back, sir?

LENHARD. Eystein is trying to ride two horses. But he's a simple fellow, even if he is brave. I am giving him an errand which will take him to Laugardal. We ride together past the home field . . . then we return. I want to see the farmer's daughter. (*Some of the men laugh.*)

1ST MAN. She is said to be fair as Spring-time.

2ND MAN. People call her the Southland Sun.

LENHARD. I have seen her. I need no descriptions.

3RD MAN (*laughing*). Eystein is crazy about her; he doesn't want any one except women to look at her.

HOLM. Your plan is not a wise one, sir.

LENHARD (*with angry look*). We won't discuss that here. You obey!

HOLM. Yes, sir.

LENHARD. And if any man tells our plans to Eystein before he leaves us, that man will be shot. (EYSTEIN *comes out of the house.*)

LENHARD. Have you kissed the farmer to your heart's content?

EYSTEIN. I have brought him glad tidings.

LENHARD. Yes . . . glad tidings . . . Exactly . . . Glad tidings . . . Did he receive them with gladness?

EYSTEIN. Yes, sir.

LENHARD. And the daughter?

EYSTEIN. I didn't see her.

LENHARD (*laughs*). You didn't see her? So she did not appear? The Southland Sun did not deign to shine? She has not left home?

EYSTEIN. Left . . . I don't know . . . why do you ask?

LENHARD. Oh, just for fun. We're off now. But I should really take leave of the farmer.

EYSTEIN (*uneasy*). No . . . why? Shouldn't we start?

LENHARD (*laughs*). Yes, we had better start. (*Observes scenery.*) By the way, it's beautiful around here. Mount Ingolf is a fine mountain. I'd like to come back here again some day.

EYSTEIN (*uneasy*). Well, shall we start? You can always come back.

LENHARD. Yes. I can always return. Why not? Any time. Why not? Now, let's get started. (*They all leave. Stage is vacant a moment.*)

INGOLF (*peeps through door, looks in all directions*). They've gone. (*Comes out.*)

GUDNY (*in the doorway*). Are you sure?

INGOLF. Yes, there's no one here.

GUDNY (*comes out . . . afraid*). Don't you suspect something? That they are hiding somewhere?

INGOLF. Can you suspect Eystein of anything like that?

GUDNY. No, Eystein deceives no one. Eystein doesn't lie. (*Enter* FREYSTEIN.)

FREYSTEIN. Greetings. This is as far as I have gotten.

INGOLF. Good-day to you.

FREYSTEIN. Will you please give me a drink of water?

GUDNY. Yes . . . certainly. Wouldn't you prefer milk?

FREYSTEIN. No. Water or a bit of sour whey is good

enough for me. But I thank you just the same. (GUDNY *enters house.*)

INGOLF. Where did you stay last night?

FREYSTEIN. At Marteinstunga.

INGOLF. What kind of dreams did you have?

FREYSTEIN. Bad ones.

INGOLF. What did you dream of?

FREYSTEIN. First I dreamed that Governor Lenhard had carried off my wife . . . completely . . . carried her off to his own home.

INGOLF. Well, how did that suit you?

FREYSTEIN. Well, I found it pretty awkward . . . right at the height of the busy season. I couldn't be so sure of finding another woman. (GUDNY *comes out and hands him a glass. He drinks.*) God reward you, my dear. (GUDNY *takes the glass back.*)

INGOLF. So that was your first dream. Did you have another?

FREYSTEIN. Yes . . . A terrible one. I dreamed, sir, that Governor Lenhard had stolen my spotted calf . . . the hand-fed one. Do you think it might mean something?

INGOLF. Not a blessed thing. What makes you think it might?

FREYSTEIN. I've sometimes dreamed of things which actually came true. I hope that this will not happen. I hope he doesn't carry off the calf. That would be no joke . . . on top of all the other losses I've suffered. It's a fine calf. Do you suppose he'll take the calf?

INGOLF. I hope not.

FREYSTEIN. And then I hope Torfi will arrive. When do you expect him?

INGOLF. I don't know. But listen, Freystein, mind you tell no one we expect the sheriff.

FREYSTEIN. Yes . . . I mind that. But couldn't I tell my wife? She'll question me when I get home—I know that And she's so confoundedly anxious. I don't know why . . . but it seems to me she's never quite so unreasonable as at the mention of Governor Lenhard's name . . . used as I am to her lecturing me about one thing or another. Still I think I know . . . It's no small loss we've suffered.

INGOLF. Better tell no one, then there's no risk. Just remember to tell no one. Remember, the sheriff forbade all

talk of his coming. It would be no light matter for you to fail him and so incur his anger.

FREYSTEIN. No . . . God forbid. He'd likely have me flogged. That would be far from pleasant . . . on top of everything else. But listen, Ingolf—

INGOLF. Yes.

FREYSTEIN. Don't you think you could mention it to Torfi, to get my cow back? He was pretty short when I spoke of it myself, yesterday.

INGOLF. Yes . . . and I'll be glad to, Freystein, my man.

FREYSTEIN. And the rope too. I simply can't spare the rope. (*Enter* GOVERNOR LENHARD *and his men in marching order.*)

LENHARD (*commanding*). Halt! (*They stop in front of farm house door.*)

FREYSTEIN. God Almighty help me! (*Tries to bolt.*)

LENHARD (*still commanding*). Stand still, man.

FREYSTEIN (*stopping*). Who . . . ? I . . . ?

LENHARD. Yes, you. Where are you going?

FREYSTEIN. I was going home.

LENHARD. Where is your home?

FREYSTEIN. At Kotstrand.

LENHARD (*kindly*). Oh . . . then we're old friends. You're the insect from Kotstrand?

FREYSTEIN (*relieved at the changed tone of voice*). Oh, yes.

LENHARD. Very well, man. Hold still . . . perfectly still . . . do you understand that? Until I tell you to move. If you remain still, you shall not be killed.

FREYSTEIN. I'll stand absolutely still.

LENHARD (*to his men*). Five of you search for the girl all over the home-field. She may be at the haymaking. If she's there bring her. But you mustn't hurt her. I do not want her all disfigured. (*Five men leave.*) (INGOLF *has remained still, with his right hand under his smock, and looking hard at* GOVERNOR LENHARD.)

LENHARD. Greetings, farmer! (*Extends his hand.* INGOLF *makes a movement to take it . . . but suddenly whips out a dagger from under his smock and makes a pass at* GOVERNOR LENHARD. *It glances from his side, for he wears a metal tunic under his cloak. The knife drops.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *picks it up.*)

LENHARD. So this is your caliber. You didn't take into

account how I dressed . . . Rather coldly inclined towards your temporary son-in-law. Take him, men! (*The Governor's men surround him. He fights them off but they overpower and hold him.*)

LENHARD. Don't wound him. His daughter might be displeased with me. Tie him up! (*They bind him hand and foot. He lies on the ground.*)

LENHARD. Up with him. Set him on the riding block, so that I can see his face. (*They obey.*) (*To the rest of his men.*) Go and search the houses and bring me the girl. Make haste, but do not hurt her. (*They go in.*)

INGOLF. Have you no decency, Governor? My daughter is an innocent child . . . why should you seek to disgrace her?

LENHARD. This is rather a change of heart since trying to kill me with this dagger a moment ago. You're such a rogue, I am not certain I'll do you the honor I had intended. I may be in such a humor that I'll throw your daughter to the stable boy at Arnarbali. He's as ferocious looking as a troll and covered with muck. If I take her, instead, tonight, it will be for her own sake . . . not yours.

INGOLF. Yes, Governor Lenhard. I know that might is yours. You are able to treat us as you see fit. But when the executioner's axe is swung over your neck, remember this hour. And remember that I now curse you from the very depths of my soul.

LENHARD (*fingers the dagger and holds it out*). Remember, man, that with this knife you intended to kill me a few moments ago. It didn't stick . . . it might stick elsewhere. You wear no coat of mail.

INGOLF. Then all you need do is finish me. It would probably be best for me. When my only child has been disgraced, then there's not much for me . . . an old man, to hope for. Don't think I am afraid to die. I've faced an eruption from Mt. Hecla, and likewise the plague. I've fallen into the Olfus River . . . also the ocean; held onto the keel of my boat and been washed off again and again. I've never stood in fear of death, and I don't now.

LENHARD (*tossing away the dagger. Speaks to* FREYSTEIN). You insect from Kotstrand.

FREYSTEIN. Eh . . . ? Meaning me?

LENHARD. Yes. You have nothing to do. Pick up that rag and gag him.

FREYSTEIN. Who . . . ? I . . . ?

LENHARD. Yes. You have nothing else to do.

FREYSTEIN (*hesitant*). I . . . I think . . . he might possibly hurt me.

LENHARD. You fool, can't you see that the man is bound hand and foot?

FREYSTEIN. Yes, but still he might . . . possibly bite me.

LENHARD. Obey! (FREYSTEIN *picks up rag and ties over* INGOLF'S *mouth.*)

LENHARD (*kindly*). Well . . . insect! You're obedient. Not exactly a leader of men. But obedient.

FREYSTEIN (*glad but embarrassed*). Say, Governor . . . Sir Governor I mean to say . . . do you think you might consider . . .

LENHARD . . . Consider what? Out with it!

FREYSTEIN. Returning my cow to me.

LENHARD. No, that's out of the question.

FREYSTEIN. But . . . No . . . I suppose not . . . . But the rope?

LENHARD. What infernal rope? (*Enter Governor's men from the homefield.*)

1ST MAN. There's not a good looking girl in the homefield. All old women.

LENHARD. Well then . . . fetch the horses. (*Governor's men lead* GUDNY *out of the house.*)

GUDNY (*in terror*). What are you going to do with me? What are you going to do with me?

LENHARD. Nothing, dear young lady. No harm. Invite you to a change from this monotony . . . a ride on the best horse to be found. Invite you to come with me.

GUDNY (*excited*). Are you going to take me by force? Willingly I should never come.

LENHARD. We're going to take you along. Go back and find some wraps for the lady. (*A man runs back into the house.* LENHARD *looks at her admiringly.*)

LENHARD. Let go of her . . . she can't get away from us here. And no one touches this woman but me. (GOVERNOR LENHARD *goes to his men . . . they surround her, all but* HOLM, *and he gives orders;* HOLM *picks up dagger unnoticed.*

GUDNY *runs to her father and embraces him and removes the gag from his mouth.*)

GUDNY. Darling Father! God help us. Now there's no other help or defense!

INGOLF (*low voice*). No. But do all you can to detain him . . . fair means or foul . . . you are resourceful . . . exceptionally. Help may arrive before you expect . . . But for God's sake, delay them.

HOLM (*hands* GUDNY *the dagger*). Hide it.

GUDNY (*relieved . . . conceals it in her dress*). Thank you . . . I may use it on myself, if I cannot put it to any other use. (*Man returns with cloak and hood.* GOVERNOR LENHARD *takes them.*)

LENHARD (*bowing*). Will the young lady do me the honor of allowing me to assist her? (*Puts the garments on her against her will then takes her arm.*) Now we're off!

CURTAIN

ACT IV.

(*A room at the farm of* HRAUN. *Alcove backstage. Doors right.* GUDNY *sitting sadly, rests her face in her hands.* EYSTEIN *enters and she jumps up angrily.*)

GUDNY. I suppose you're to keep watch over me. Are you the warden?

EYSTEIN. I . . . ? No, I'm not the warden. They wouldn't trust me that far.

GUDNY. What's the matter? Tell me . . . you must know. Has the devil been let loose in this country?

EYSTEIN . . . Or men's evil instincts . . . which amounts to the same thing.

GUDNY. What have we done to deserve this oppression and these insults?

EYSTEIN. Been the weaker party.

GUDNY. But you're one of the . . . (*Checks herself.*)

EYSTEIN. One of the devils, you were going to say. Maybe I am. But it may also be, that I'm a weaker party. That sin is punishable several ways. But do you take me for one?

GUDNY. I don't know. I know nothing. (*Excited.*)

Oh . . . I just had a dream. I thought I was looking into a burning crater . . . and under my feet only a thin board directly over it. Then darkness fell and seemed to press in on all sides . . . or something that dwelt in the darkness. Then I heard the board cracking and laughter down in the crater. I didn't know whether it was death or the devils laughing . . . The dream is coming true.

EYSTEIN (*determined*). For God's sake, don't lose courage. There's no reason for that.

GUDNY. No reason? Why say such things? Do you think I'm out of my mind?

EYSTEIN. No, but I think you've forgotten that I love you.

GUDNY. Governor Lenhard says the same.

EYSTEIN (*in surprise*). Has the Governor been telling you that I love you?

GUDNY. No. He merely states his own case.

EYSTEIN. Oh . . . I see. Now I understand you . . . but you must not misinterpret what I say. This may be our last interview. At least the last time I shall speak of my love. I'm never going to speak of it again. I merely wish to say that I'm ready to do anything for your sake. (*Pause.*)

GUDNY. You can do nothing. Governor Lenhard has a lot of men. What can you do against such numbers?

EYSTEIN. I can fight the Governor; I can kill him.

GUDNY. You . . . ?

EYSTEIN. Yes, he'll be here soon.

GUDNY (*shudders*). Yes . . . God protect me!

EYSTEIN. And I can demand your release. And when he refuses as I know he will—I can attack him. I'm determined to do it. (*Pause.*)

GUDNY. No!

EYSTEIN. No? . . . Why not? He betrayed me today. Now I hate him. I'm determined to do it.

GUDNY. No, Eystein, for my sake, don't.

EYSTEIN (*surprised*). For your sake? It is for your sake I will do it.

GUDNY. What will happen. Governor Lenhard's men will avenge him.

EYSTEIN. Yes . . . They are beginning to tire of him, but they would not stand by if he were killed.

GUDNY. And you couldn't hold out against such odds.

EYSTEIN. I don't know . . . It would depend on where I was . . . not in the open.

GUDNY. Yes . . . I understand.

EYSTEIN. Do you think, Gudny, that death holds any terrors for me as things stand?

GUDNY. But *I* object. (*With feeling.*) I cannot bear to think of it. I should never be happy again.

EYSTEIN. Gudny . . . you spoke differently at Selfoss two weeks back!

GUDNY. Don't blame me, Eystein . . . I've enough to bear.

EYSTEIN. No . . . Forgive me!

GUDNY. You're fortunate. Doubly fortunate.

EYSTEIN. I . . . ? I'm the most luckless man in the land.

GUDNY. No. You're never undecided. You know what you wish. And you're always convinced that it is right.

EYSTEIN. But I often wish for the wrong thing.

GUDNY. But I am a reed before the wind. It's so hard for me to be certain. It's all so complicated. And I can do nothing until I feel certain. You do not know that form of torture . . . But now I know my will.

EYSTEIN (*curious*). What is it?

GUDNY. I wish to bear my burden alone. I do not wish to be the cause of further tragedies. I wish to fight a duel with Governor Lenhard.

EYSTEIN. Gudny! ! !

GUDNY. I'm armed. (*Shows the dagger and hides it again.*)

EYSTEIN. Have you gone mad, Gudny . . .? Do you think for a moment you could dispose of Governor Lenhard with such a weapon?

GUDNY. I have another one. I have a tongue. Someone said it was a weapon . . . a poisonous one. (*Pause.* EYSTEIN *looks at her and then begins to understand.*)

EYSTEIN. Governor Lenhard says he's in love with you?

GUDNY. He has told me so.

EYSTEIN (*hardening*). Exactly.

GUDNY (*laughs*). Are you still jealous? Of Governor Lenhard? Isn't it strange that I should be able to laugh, placed as I am? Don't you think it's funny that you're the cause of it?

EYSTEIN (*calm*). But don't you see the odds against you? The Governor is not himself. He's been drinking. And if

ordinarily he's a ruthless man, he's doubly so now. What will happen when you are alone with him? Don't you see? Don't you see . . . don't you see the alcove there?

GUDNY. God help me. Is he very drunk?

EYSTEIN. Not very . . . the more the pity . . . but he's well in his cups . . . the most dangerous stage . . . when all roads seem clear and he's the lord of the earth.

GUDNY. Then he shall keep on drinking. We'll drink together.

EYSTEIN. That's a mistake. It's the worst kind of crime . . . that you should be left alone with Governor Lenhard, when I can prevent it, and disgraceful to me beyond anything that I can bear!

GUDNY. It's my turn. You've plunged into a luckless career on my account . . . you shall not suffer death for my sake. I'll see to that. (*Enter* GOVERNOR LENHARD, *showing signs of drink.*)

LENHARD. Good-day to you . . . lovely goddess of my dreams. (GUDNY *bows to him smiling. He looks at her in surprise.*) Is this a milder mood, beloved? Has the ice melted? Heaven be praised . . . The ice of springtime is weak. (*Turns to* EYSTEIN *laughing.*) Your trip to Laugardal was brief. (EYSTEIN *is silent.* LENHARD *laughs.*) How did the minister . . . the peacemaker receive you?

EYSTEIN. Sir, are you going to insult me again?

LENHARD. (*lightly*). Are you vexed because I changed my plans? I'm no God.

EYSTEIN. No, decidedly not.

LENHARD (*laughs*). There, you see! I'm a child of man and I change my plans. I'm not a learned man. But I've heard the priests quoting words to that effect . . . How did you know we were here?

EYSTEIN. I heard it as soon as I crossed the Olfus River.

LENHARD. The farmer here is wealthy though the houses be small. There is silver—money also—but especially silver—It was accumulated here after the plague—Wonderful that the plague should help things so—Should have the Black Plague every year. But I'd rather be absent. Anyway, I'm going to leave. We shall move on—preferably tomorrow.

EYSTEIN. Where to?

LENHARD. South first. Then to Denmark. You shall

come with me. You may become a great man there—I'm leaving—I'm weary of Iceland.

EYSTEIN. But your crimes?

LENHARD (*angry*). How dare you—you cotter's son!

EYSTEIN. Yes! !

GUDNY (*has been sitting while they talked. Now rises suddenly, and comes between them*). No bickering!

LENHARD (*bowing and smiling*). I bow—always—before the power of beauty. Queens are all powerful, when they possess charm.

GUDNY. I thank you, my lord.

EYSTEIN. Flattery brings results!

LENHARD. She's civilized and courtly—even if she is an Icelander. Now get out, Eystein; go eat with your company. Food must be ready by now. They slaughtered as soon as we got here. The least I could do to honor the queen was to . . .

EYSTEIN . . . To slaughter stolen sheep.

LENHARD. Now get out, Eystein!

EYSTEIN. No, I'll stay.

GUDNY (*looks at him with love and speaks beseechingly*). Eystein!

EYSTEIN (*thinks a moment, then speaks with intense seriousness and emotion*). I'll go . . . and although I know that I stand convicted before all the powers of heaven, yet, if any do exist, I implore them for your safety now. (*Leaves them.*)

LENHARD (*has followed* EYSTEIN *with a surprised look*). Quite a speech for Eystein.

GUDNY. It is the way of my people.

LENHARD. A boring trait. But you're free from that defect. You're as airy as the breeze. You're jovial as . . . as . . . (*Laughs.*) . . . as I am.

GUDNY (*laughs*). Thank you, Governor. I am honored by such a comparison.

LENHARD (*looking at her steadily*). Have you never been away from Selfoss . . . for any length of time, I mean?

GUDNY. I spent some time at Skalholt; also at Klofi.

LENHARD. You seem perfectly at home with guests and noble company.

GUDNY. I'm not receiving guests now . . . I am myself, a guest. I hope you're not going to let me die of thirst.

LENHARD. Heaven forgive me! The only adorable visitor

I have ever had in this country, has had no refreshment. I shall order food, I shall order wine.

GUDNY. No food. I couldn't eat. But wine, yes; I'm thirsty. I'm tired.

LENHARD (*goes to door . . . calls*). Kristjan! (*A young attendant of the governor's enters.*) Wine and two beakers . . . directly. Be seated, my adorable one. Let your weariness fade away from you like the mists of yesterday. Let bliss fill the present moment as incense permeates the air. I would burn incense before you. (*They sit down. Servant reappears, with an earthen-ware pitcher and two beakers, then leaves.* LENHARD *pours the wine.*) Drink, my adorable! We drink to love! (*They drink.* LENHARD *observes her closely. She begins to sing him a tune.*)

LENHARD. Sing . . . my adorable . . . Sing something for me.

GUDNY. I cannot sing . . . What shall I sing, my lord?

LENHARD. Some of your folksongs. You Icelanders can all sing and write poetry . . . even if you can do nothing else . . . excepting you alone, of course . . . who can be so adorable. And that is the best, the most glorious task for anyone in this world.

GUDNY (*Looks sideways at* LENHARD. *Thinks a moment . . . Sings.*)

CHESS

Torrad encountered an ogress today.
—Thumping steps and heavy to the cave descended.
She found him asleep in a meadow of hay.
—And life on a chess-game depended.—

She brought in the chess-game of gold for her guest.
—Thumping steps and heavy through the cavern wending.
Then trembled the rocks as she laughed at the jest!
His life on a chess-game depending.

"If you can defeat me, I'll spare you," she said.
—Thumping steps and heavy through the cavern wending.
"But check-mated you shall be torn into shreds—
—Your life on this chess-game depending."

God knows whether Torrad can reason the game.
—Thumping steps and heavy to the cave descended.—
And whether he laughed at the close of the same.
—His life on the outcome depended.—

LENHARD (*has listened attentively. Laughs*). We drink to the ogress!

GUDNY. That toast I will not drink, my lord.

LENHARD. You're only a child . . . even if you are an adorable child. You don't understand might . . . You don't understand power. You don't know the supreme joy of asserting your strength . . . to let anger take hold . . . to let the weaklings crawl . . . bounce . . . run into hiding . . . and clutch them just the same. But what nonsense . . . even children know that. There's not a living being who's unaware of it. Nations know it. Rulers know it . . . children know it . . . the eagle knows it . . . and the cat. Anyone who says he does not know it is a hypocrite.

GUDNY. Am I then, a hypocrite, sir?

LENHARD. No, you're an adorable child . . . a crafty child. But tell me . . . how do you think that game of chess came out?

GUDNY. I don't know, my lord. The song doesn't say.

LENHARD. There should be more.

GUDNY. How should it end?

LENHARD. It should end up by telling us that the ogress was a princess under a spell and in order to release her, Torrad has to fall in love with her—and then she showered him with wealth and good fortune as the sun floods the world with light. I know such stories and I know them to be true. (*Moves up closer. Excited.*) They *are* true.

GUDNY (*moves back . . . afraid, but well controlled*). Yes, my lord, I understand.

LENHARD. And now we shall make them come true.

GUDNY (*laughing*). Shall we drink a toast to the princess under a spell.

LENHARD. Yes! Yes! We'll drink. We'll enjoy life, and the ogress shall dissolve as snow before the sun. (*They drink.*)

GUDNY (*laughing*). That toast I'll drink to the last drop.

LENHARD (*observing her*). You're adorable. Yes, we'll drink it to the last drop. (*They drink.* LENHARD *looks into her beaker.*)

LENHARD. You did not drink it . . . You drank noth ng.

GUDNY. I'm not a man. I cannot drink deeply. (*Suddenly*). Shall I sing to you some more, my lord?

LENHARD. Yes, sing, my adorable! Sing happiness and joy into the cavern of the ogress. (GUDNY *sings.*)

MY COUNTRY LIES WOUNDED

My bird has a note of joy today.
A brisk wind scatters the clouds in play
And tosses and tears unheeding.
But—my country lies wounded and bleeding.

My mountains loom in the distance blue,
And smile in the sunlight's golden hue,
—Eternal repose conceding.
But—my country lies wounded and bleeding.

My trees seem to guard some secret dark—
The leaves seem to whisper "Hush" and "hark."
And move me to tearful pleading,
For—my country lies wounded and bleeding.

My fondest love is my native land.
In youth she has fired ambitions grand,
In manhood all others leading.
And—now she lies wounded and bleeding.

Oh, save her, Lord, in her tragic plight!
Reveal in a flash of holy light
These turbulent waves receding!
For, oh, she lies wounded and bleeding.

LENHARD. That's a cheerless song. How can you sing that sort of thing when I want to be joyous . . . more joyous than ever before in my life?

GUDNY. It is one of our folksongs. What should people sing? A jubilee, when they're sad?

LENHARD. I understand. Let us not discuss it. We're not here to discuss the grumblings of unmannerly cotters. Did you hear what I said to Eystein awhile back?

GUDNY. You said several things, Governor.

LENHARD. I said I was going to leave. I mean it. Tomorrow—and you will come with me.

GUDNY. No, my lord. I shall stay with the cotters.

LENHARD. Now listen to me. I don't intend to carry you off. I shall not take you away against your will. I intend to take you along with me eager, happy and joyous. For I love you, Gudny. I have never bowed down to any one, never gone down on bended knees before any one, high or low, God or devil. It seems to have been foreign to my nature. I suppose I'm a relic of the Viking age. But I bow down before you—to you I go down on bended knee as to my queen. (*Kneels.*)

GUDNY (*falls back alarmed. Recovers and smiles*). Let us drink, my lord!

LENHARD (*rising*). You smiled, adorable one! Aye, let's drink. We shall drink a toast to broken spells, and to

hope . . . the hope that I may bow down before you royally robed, in a splendid palace, where you are the queen and I your humble knight and servant. And yet I would sooner imagine you in a small room, dressed in a simple kirtle as you are now . . . just as you are now . . . and that I sat at your feet while you sang for me. Not the wailings of oppressed cotters, but the jubilant songs of the free and nobly born . . . which you shall learn, as soon as you are away from this melancholy land.

GUDNY. Your hopes will never come true.

LENHARD. Yes they will. And now, we're wasting time. You have not given me a single kiss. (*He makes a sudden movement and embraces her. She finds the dagger and lightly touches his neck. He starts away from her. She holds the dagger in front of her, then gradually lowers her arm.*)

LENHARD (*quietly*). So you would do away with me, Gudny?

GUDNY. No. If so, I should have followed it up. But you cannot take me by force.

LENHARD. There's no need to get desperate. I didn't intend to harm you.

GUDNY. Then we are friends again. (*Extends her hand.*)

LENHARD (*takes her hand, smiling*). The Ogress refuses to kiss the hand which attempted her life, unless she is freed from the spell. (*Kisses her hand.*)

GUDNY. Now we must drink, my lord!

LENHARD. What shall be the toast this time? Your dagger?

GUDNY (*smiling*). No, the ogress. (*He bows; they drink; he deeply. They sit down. The drink has gone to his head.*)

GUDNY. You would do well to lie down, my lord.

LENHARD. I . . . ? Lie down . . . ?

GUDNY. Yes, there in the alcove. You are weary, and you are in your cups.

LENHARD. Will you sit by me?

GUDNY. Yes.

LENHARD (*observes her, nods, smiles*). Sit by me with the dagger?

GUDNY. I'm no murderess, Governor.

LENHARD (*looks at her, smiling*). No . . . !

GUDNY. I would show you kindness if it were possible. (*Evidently has a new idea—suddenly.*) You spoke of leaving tomorrow. Could you not make it today?—without delay?

LENHARD. Why should I leave today?

GUDNY. An incident from one of our Sagas occurred to me. A man had a vision of seeing the gable of a house vanish, and of seeing a table set . . . and all the service was covered with blood. It was an omen of death.

LENHARD. What made you think of that now?

GUDNY. I had a similar vision.

LENHARD. I don't intend to kill any one.

GUDNY. But others harbor bitter thoughts of you. (*Tense.*) Cross the mountains from here directly! Don't delay!

LENHARD (*laughs*). Isn't there something in one of your folksongs about the changeful hearts of women? A moment ago you wanted me to rest. Now you want me to cross the mountain. I don't wish to cross the mountain. I want to sleep.

GUDNY. Yes . . . I know I have nothing to say. Fate holds the reins.

LENHARD. Are you going to sit by me?

GUDNY. Yes, my lord.

LENHARD. I seemed to have lived this same moment before. I was a little lad, my sister sang me to sleep. (*He lies down in the wall bed. She sits down beside him. He lifts his head and looks at her.*) Sing, adorable one!

DEATH COMES RIDING

Death comes riding, the road is clear.
Your loved one shall rue the meeting.
His menacing pace brings waves of fear,
As wildly he rides down the road-way clear.
Oh, heard you the hoof-beats fleeting?

Death rides over the drifted snow.
The skeleton nods a greeting.
Beware, oh, beware of him, child of woe,
As wildly he rides o'er the drifted snow.
Now hear I the hoof-beats fleeting.

Looks at him). He's asleep. What shall I do next? (*Enter in great haste*, EYSTEIN.)

EYSTEIN. What has happened?

GUDNY. Speak quickly. (*Points to the bed.*)

EYSTEIN. God be praised! But now there are other matters at hand. The sheriff from Klofi is riding up with an army of men. Go out to meet him. The coast is clear. Governor Lenhard's men are not going to make a stand, they seem to feel that they are outnumbered. They'll do you no harm.

GUDNY (*relieved*). Then you can come with me.

EYSTEIN. No!

GUDNY. Eystein! What are you going to do?

EYSTEIN. I shall stay here.

GUDNY. Are you going to make a stand?

EYSTEIN. If Governor Lenhard so wishes.

GUDNY. But you hate him, Eystein.

EYSTEIN. Yes, I do.

GUDNY. You said yourself just awhile ago, that you would hate him for the rest of your life.

EYSTEIN. Yes, but I refuse to betray my master . . . Even if I hate him . . . even if he be the devil himself, if his life is at stake.

GUDNY. But that's absurd.

EYSTEIN. Maybe it is, but for God's sake hurry out. I must wake Governor Lenhard. They may be here any moment.

GUDNY. I'm not going to leave. There's no reason for me to leave. I'm no longer in danger. I shall stay by you and see how things turn out.

EYSTEIN. Thank you, Gudny. I know you want to cheer me by staying. But your father doesn't know that you're safe. Don't keep the news from him any longer.

GUDNY. That is for you to decide. Farewell. We shall meet again soon. (*Extends her hand.*)

EYSTEIN (*takes her hand*). Yes, you shall see me soon again . . . living or dead. Farewell.

GUDNY. Listen . . . they are coming into the house!

EYSTEIN. Yes . . . Wake Governor Lenhard. I must wait here!

GUDNY (*going towards the wall bed*). Wake up, my lord! Wake up! (*Closer*) In God's name, wake up! (*Shakes him*) The sheriff from Klofi is coming.

LENHARD (*half awake*). Are you there, adorable one? Got the knife, I expect? It doesn't matter. We must all die sooner or later.

GUDNY. Wake up! Wake up! Death may be approaching! Torfi from Klofi is coming.

LENHARD. Torfi from Klofi? Does he wish to see me? I have nothing to say to him.

GUDNY. He is bringing an army of men. (GOVERNOR LENHARD *gets up suddenly. Fighting in the door-way.* EYSTEIN *puts up a defence . . . Pause.*)

VOICE (*in passage-way*). We shall never get in this way.

2ND VOICE. Burn the house down!

INGOLF. Are you crazy? My daughter's in there.

TORFI (*in the passage*). Is Gudny of Selfoss here?

GUDNY. Yes.

TORFI. Is she a prisoner?

GUDNY. No. But I do not wish to go out if you are going to burn the house. (*Fight continues.* EYSTEIN *defends himself . . . Pause.*)

TORFI (*In the passage*). Break through the gable, men. It will only take a moment . . . for so many of you. But some one must stay to get Eystein. (*Fighting in the doorway.*)

LENHARD. Kiss me, Gudny. Put your arms around my neck. Let the sun of your love light up . . . the cavern.

GUDNY (*excited*). Are you crazy? Can't you see what is happening in the doorway? Can't you hear what they are doing to the gable? (*Noise . . . which increases back of the wall-bed.*) Listen, listen . . . They are breaking through already!

LENHARD (*composed*). Yes, I know it.

GUDNY. Then how can you . . .

LENHARD. Think of you?

GUDNY. Think of foolish things, and speak lightly? Don't you understand who's come?

LENHARD. Torfi of Klofi and a group of farmers.

GUDNY. Don't you understand that Death may be here?

LENHARD. Yes.

GUDNY. And still . . .

LENHARD. And don't you understand, my adorable one, that that's the reason I must make haste to finish tasks undone? I am not so certain of an opportunity to kiss a beautiful woman when . . . (*Makes a motion with his hand. Laughs.*)

GUDNY. You're no craven. I almost think you deserve to meet some good woman who loves you . . . out there beyond. (*The gable is broken down.* TORFI, INGOLF, MAGNUS, OLAF, BJARNI, *and others come through alcove that made the bed. They are armed and attack* GOVERNOR LENHARD *who defends himself. In the passage men fight with* EYSTEIN. *Both men are overpowered and bound.*)

INGOLF (*to* LENHARD). It isn't only the farmer at Selfoss who knows the feel of a rope.

LENHARD (*laughs*). So I see. The wheel of fortune turns this way and that.

TORFI. Take the prisoners out and guard them.

LENHARD. May I ask . . . ? Where are my men?

TORFI. Your soldiers are locked up in the store house, unarmed. They gave up without a struggle and laid down their arms.

LENHARD. Thank you, Sheriff. (TORFI *motions to his men to lead them out. They go.*)

GUDNY (*has stood aside evidently in deep emotion. When* EYSTEIN *goes through door; she runs after him and cries in anguish.*) Eystein!

INGOLF. Where are you going?

GUDNY. Out! (*Leaves.*)

CURTAIN

ACT V.

(*In the courtyard of the* HRAUN *farm. Gabled fronts of the farmhouses. Mountain scenery.*)

HELGA. The men will be waking up soon?

GUDNY. Yes . . . quite likely. But they haven't really slept long.

HELGA. Longer than you have. You haven't slept a wink.

GUDNY. No.

HELGA. Are you not going to try to sleep?

GUDNY. No.

HELGA. Where were all these men put up?

GUDNY. Some in the hayloft. Some in the house . . . Some have stood guard.

HELGA. Over Governor Lenhard?

GUDNY. Yes . . . and . . . (*Is about to weep.*)

HELGA. Over Eystein?

GUDNY. Yes.

HELGA. Weren't you afraid when you were alone with Governor Lenhard?

GUDNY. Yes . . . I was terrified. (*Weeps and falls on* HELGA'S *neck.*)

HELGA (*embracing her. Observes her*). You are all shaken, child, as might be expected. (*Enter* INGOLF *from house.*)

INGOLF. Will you take some water to the sheriff, Gudny? He's getting up. (GUDNY *goes in.*)

HELGA. You shouldn't order her about. She's worn out. I should have gone. (*Makes as if to go.*)

INGOLF. No. Don't go. I must speak with you. I don't like the way Gudny looks.

HELGA. No . . . ?

INGOLF. She's been talking to me all night. Can you guess what about?

HELGA. Of Eystein.

INGOLF. Yes. While he was nothing but a bold upstart, he got nowheres with her. But now that he has become a criminal . . . (HELGA *nods.*) What a perverse way of looking at things?

HELGA. Yes, we women are like that.

INGOLF. Women?

HELGA. Yes, even the finest of us.

INGOLF. Then you think?

HELGA. That you must save your only child? I'm sure of it.

INGOLF. Yes, but it's easier said than done. I suppose even if Eystein should be committed to prison for life—and even if he were executed, she would not give up thinking about him, since her mind has taken this turn.

HELGA. You don't understand me at all. You must save Eystein for her sake.

INGOLF. Have all you women gone crazy?—I thought that you would be the last one to do so.

TORFI (*comes out of the house. To* HELGA). Well . . . so you are here! Good morning! (*Kisses her.*) What brings you?

HELGA. I was anxious. I had to know what turn things had taken, and so I set out last evening. Now I've heard the whole story. What do you intend to do with Governor Lenhard?

TORFI. I don't know.

HELGA. You *do* know.

TORFI (*smiles at her*). No, I do *not* know. I thought it would be unwise to hold any council in the excitement of last night. A little later I shall speak with my men.

HELGA. But what about Eystein?

TORFI. I shall take him with me. He's easily kept. He will be tried by the law of the land. There are heavy charges against him.

HELGA. You do not know how heavy those charges are.

TORFI. Then they shall be investigated.

HELGA. I know how he behaved at Selfoss and also here last evening. He's young and his impulses run away with him. But he has the makings of a man in him. And this little nation can not afford to waste any such.

TORFI. But justice, my dear! Justice! You women are so apt to forget that.

HELGA. Justice! Justice! ! Do you think I'm a child? Do you think you can make me believe that any man thinks of justice, unless it serves his purpose?

TORFI. Helga!

HELGA. If Eystein were your son . . . what would become of your justice? If he were your friend, wouldn't you go out of your way to save him? But you feel hardly towards him . . . and hence you talk about justice.

TORFI (*laughingly to* INGOLF). This is what it is to be married. Perhaps you have forgotten how it feels . . . you've been free for so long.

INGOLF. Are you sure it is not just as hard to have an only daughter . . . if you love her very much? (*Enter* FREYSTEIN.)

FREYSTEIN (*looks around in evident fear. Sees* TORFI). Good-day to you, Sheriff.

TORFI. Good-day. Oh . . . You're the man from Kotstrand?

FREYSTEIN. Oh, yes, I'm Freystein of Kotstrand. Am I safe around here?

TORFI. That all depends on how you look at it.

FREYSTEIN (*alarmed*). God Almighty help me! Then they lied to me. They told me you had taken Governor Lenhard prisoner.

TORFI. Governor Lenhard won't hurt you.

FREYSTEIN. Thank God! I came here to inquire whether I would not be able to get my cow back.

TORFI. I know nothing about that. We haven't yet investigated what people may be able to get back.

FREYSTEIN. But do you not think I will at least be able to get the rope?

TORFI. That may be.

HELGA. Freystein, was Eystein with the Governor when they raided Kotstrand?

FREYSTEIN. Eystein . . . ? Yes, I should say so.

HELGA. Did he do anything? Did he do anyone any harm?

FREYSTEIN. Did he do anything . . . ? Yes, I should say so.

HELGA. What did he do?

FREYSTEIN. He fought like the devil.

HELGA. Whom did he fight?

FREYSTEIN. The man who attacked . . .

TORFI . . . Your wife?

FREYSTEIN. Yes, I thought he had gone crazy . . . completely. He threw the man out and beat up many others. And then he abused them in the vilest way. I could not understand how he *dared*.

HELGA. There, now you have heard it, my dear.

TORFI. Now you be on your way, Freystein, I must speak with my wife and with Ingolf.

FREYSTEIN. Am I to go?

TORFI. Yes . . . out in the homefield, or anywhere . . . I really don't care where you go.

FREYSTEIN. I suppose there's no danger?

TORFI. Danger . . . ?

FREYSTEIN. Yes . . . my life's not in danger, is it?

TORFI. No. Be on your way. (FREYSTEIN *leaves*. GUDNY *comes out of the house*.)

GUDNY. Have you spoken with the sheriff, father?

HELGA. Yes, we have spoken to him.

TORFI (*laughs*). Now I begin to understand. So it's on account of this young friend of mine that you're all so concerned about Eystein!

HELGA. Certainly. Is there anything strange about that? You may have found out before this that I'm loyal to my friends.

TORFI. What does Magnus Olafson think?

HELGA. How does it concern him?

TORFI. If you think it does not concern him you don't know the situation. Moreover, we can't risk strained relations between the Bishop of Skalholt and myself. Listen to me, Gudny! Magnus is a handsome man.

GUDNY. Yes.

TORFI. He stands to become a wealthy man.

GUDNY. Yes.

TORFI. And he is a good man.

GUDNY. Yes.

TORFI. Eystein is a poor man

GUDNY. Through no fault of his.

TORFI. And he has joined the worst enemies of his people.

GUDNY. But that was on my account.

TORFI. He has taken up arms against the authorities of his country and against his people.

GUDNY. On my account.

TORFI. He has been suspiciously connected with serious crimes.

GUDNY. But that was on my account.

TORFI. And now he is a prisoner and an accused criminal.

GUDNY. And it is all on my account.

TORFI (*to* INGOLF). It looks to me as if your daughter was rather stubborn.

HELGA. She is. We women are like that.

TORFI (*smiling*). If I was not married to the most charming and the wisest woman in the land, and if my young lady friend was not present . . . I should be inclined to say that women were not exactly sensible beings.

HELGA. Still, you do as we ask, in spite of this lack of common sense.

TORFI. What is it you are really asking for?

HELGA. We are asking you to release Eystein and to bring no charges against him.

TORFI (*laughing*). I shall let Magnus Olafson decide. We shall see whether *he* requests it . . . and now, Ingolf, we must get the men together for a conference. (*They leave.*)

HELGA. You must speak with Magnus.

GUDNY. I . . . ? I expect to. Several things have seemed hard lately, but I'm not sure that this is not the hardest of all.

HELGA. I'll bring him here. (*Leaves*) (GUDNY *sits down and thinks for a moment.*)

MAGNUS (*comes in looking happy*). You sent for me, you wanted to speak with me? I thank you. . . . Ever since we met last I've been wanting to have a talk with you. What's the trouble—you seem depressed?

GUDNY. Yes.

MAGNUS. What is it? . . . I expected to find you happy over your escape from the dangers of last evening. (GUDNY *is silent.*) Tell me, Gudny, my beloved, is there anything I can do for you?

GUDNY (*braces up*). It rests with you whether Eystein be-

comes a free man again, or whether charges will be brought against him.

MAGNUS. With me . . . ? How?

GUDNY. I know it. The Sheriff intends to let you decide.

MAGNUS. I suppose his offense is pretty serious.

GUDNY. No . . . He's been reckless. He was carried away in a moment of anger, and he has suffered for it ever since. But he has done nothing base. On the other hand, he has performed several deeds of real heroism. Think what a character it takes to do that, in such company as he was in.

MAGNUS. Gudny!

GUDNY. Will you now do the noblest deed that in your whole life you may have the chance of doing . . . and save him?

MAGNUS. Let me ask you another question. Will you become my wife?

GUDNY. Forgive me! Forgive me, Magnus, I can't do it!

MAGNUS. Are you certain this time?

GUDNY.

MAGNUS. you love Eystein? (GUDNY *is silent.*) I understand your si ce. Good-bye, Gudny. This is the parting of our ways for good and all. And I pray the Lord that your way may lead to happiness. Goodbye. (*Enter* HELGA, TORFI, INGOLF, OLAF, BJARNI, *and others of* TORFI'S *men.* MAGNUS *joins them.*)

HELGA (*to* GUDNY). What did he say?

GUDNY. He made no promise. (*Leaves.*)

TORFI. We must now discuss our further plans of action.

BJARNI. Sheriff, this attack was a disgrace.

TORFI. Why?

BJARNI. All this company makes war on two men, only.

TORFI (*smiling*). I'm sorry, my good Bjarni, that I was unable to supply more of a force for you to fight . . . But as I said before, we must now discuss further plans.

OLAF. We should have done so sooner . . . preferably before we set out.

TORFI. What do you propose, Olaf?

OLAF. I don't know. But I certainly wish to proceed with caution.

TORFI. What plans have you to offer, Magnus Olafson?

MAGNUS. I'm the youngest member of this band . . . and don't deserve the honor of being the first to speak.

TORFI. When you honored me by joining my ranks at Selfoss yesterday, I decided that nothing should be done on this expedition, without consulting you. (*Pause.*)

INGOLF. The sheriff naturally bears in mind that you are the Bishop's foster son.

MAGNUS. My foster father hates foreign oppression as much as any one.

TORFI. What would he do in a case like this?

MAGNUS. He would put every thing into the hands of the man who took the initiative in ridding the nation of this evil.

TORFI. Remember, Magnus Olafson, that you may never again in your life face so serious a moment. Are you willing to be responsible for what you say?

MAGNUS. Yes, I am aware of what I am saying, and I accept the responsibility.

VOICES. Hear! Hear!

INGOLF. So now the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities of Iceland join hands.

TORFI. Now all Icelanders have joined hands.

VOICES. Hear! Hear!

OLAF. What other plans have you, Sheriff?

VOICES. Yes . . . What will you do with Governor Lenhard?

TORFI. We shall do that which seems necessary, to teach foreign evil-doers not to commit outrages on our people. We shall do what we Icelanders are capable of when we are united. We shall execute Governor Lenhard.

OLAF (*excited*). What are you saying, Sheriff?

TORFI. You heard me, Olaf. Did not all of you hear my words?

VOICES. Yes.

OLAF. But I say . . .

TORFI. No discussion. Bring the prisoners. (*Two men leave.*)

OLAF. But Eystein . . . ? What are we to do about him, Sheriff?

TORFI. That's not a difficult matter. It needs no discussion. (TORFI's *men bring* GOVERNOR LENHARD *and* EYSTEIN. GUDNY *is with them and stations herself beside* EYSTEIN, *clasping his arm in both hands. The prisoner's hands are tied.*)

TORFI. Eystein Brandsson.

HELGA (*hastens to* TORFI *and speaks to him in a low voice.*

Then turns to MAGNUS, *speaking softly.*) Has not Gudny spoken to you?

MAGNUS. You need not remind me of anything. (*To* TORFI). Do my words carry any weight with you, Sheriff?

TORFI. Most assuredly.

MAGNUS. Then I ask you to release Eystein and to bring no charges against him.

TORFI. The authorities at Skalholt, together with the women-folk, have gotten the best of me to-day. (*To* GUDNY). You say that it is because of you that he is in this situation? It therefore behooves you to release him. (*She complies.*) Governor Lenhard! . . . your evil deeds need no recounting. Prepare yourself to meet death. Do you wish a priest?

LENHARD. A priest . . . ? Why should I see a priest?

TORFI. Just as you wish.

LENHARD. I'm beaten. I did not expect it. I little thought you would suddenly become so efficient with all your internal bickerings. But I'm an old soldier, and I know how to take the consequences of defeat.

OLAF. Do you mean that you do not wish to speak with a priest before you . . . before you . . . ?

LENHARD (*looking towards* GUDNY). There stands my priest. May I have a word with the girl? (*She goes to him.*) You wished me to cross the mountain yesterday. I thank you for that, adorable one. Now I will cross a different one. Yesterday you said I deserved to meet a good woman on the hinter side of the mountain. I thank you again, you lovable child. If I should have the good fortune to meet anyone as charming as you, I will be well pleased with the trip. Farewell! Forgive me that as things are now, I can do no more than bow before you. (*Kneels before her.*)

GUDNY. God be with you, my lord!

LENHARD (*rising*). Sheriff, I am quite ready.

CURTAIN

EINAR H. KVARAN

AN ICELANDIC NOVELIST AND DRAMATIST

By Richard Beck

To the literary world, at least outside of Scandinavia, Iceland is even now known as the "saga-land." Assuredly, this is a deserved and honorable name, indicating as it does the unique and rich contribution made by the early Icelanders to the world's literature. It is, nevertheless, equally true that the Old Icelandic literature, because of its historical and cultural significance together with its literary excellence, has so impressed itself upon the reading public of other lands as to make them forget that Iceland has produced later literature worthy of the name. The fact is that ever since that "golden age" which gave birth to the old, the classical literature of Iceland, the Eddas and the sagas, literary production has never ceased in that remote northern land.

It is a trite saying that the literary development of a nation does not progress in a straight line; it rises and falls somewhat after the fashion of waves on the ocean. The illustration applies to Iceland. Down through the centuries its literature has at times risen to considerable heights, or in turn moved on lower levels. Yet, it is encouraging to remember that even when national life was at its lowest ebb, Iceland possessed writers of merit, notably poets. During the last hundred years, especially, Icelandic literature has flourished abundantly; and to-day it is more varied than ever before. The poets still hold a prominent place, but novelists, writers of short stories, and dramatists also are numerous. In proportion to the population—110,000—the literary production in Iceland is unusually large. Needless to say, it is not all of high quality. Nevertheless, several of the Icelandic writers of the last fifty years have added to the literature of their country works of genuine and lasting significance in prose and verse alike. There is indeed a good deal of uncertain groping, experimenting, on the part of the younger Icelandic authors. Withal there are many signs of growth in the literary life of present day Iceland whatever the future may bring. At any rate it is to be regretted that modern Icelandic literature is still largely a *terra incognita* to the reading public of England and of America.

Twenty-two years ago *Poet Lore* published the first Icelandic play to be translated into English, Indridi Einarsson's *Sword and Crozier*, together with an estimate of the author by Lee M. Hollander, the translator. It is fitting that the same publication should at this time offer its readers the English translation of another Icelandic drama, written by a literary artist who fully deserves a larger audience than his countrymen of some one hundred thousand.

Without doubt, Einar H. Kvaran is one of the most significant writers of present day Iceland; of the older generation he is surely the most productive and most versatile man of letters; further, he probably enjoys in his country greater popularity than any other Icelandic writer of our time. This was clearly seen on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, December 6, 1929, when Icelanders at home and abroad paid him a generous tribute. And this was a well deserved honor. For over half a century Kvaran has been a vital force in the literature and the intellectual life of his nation. As he wields an unusually effective pen and has championed many significant causes, his influence on his people, in Iceland and elsewhere, has been very far-reaching and has cut deep.

Einar Hjorleifsson Kvaran was born at the parsonage of Vallanes in eastern Iceland, but he spent his childhood and youth in the northern part of the country where his father was a rural pastor. Kvaran received a good education and was graduated from the College of Iceland, at Reykjavik, in 1881; the same summer he entered upon graduate study at the University of Copenhagen, specializing in political science. In 1885 he terminated his studies and emigrated to America. For ten years he remained in Winnipeg, Canada, the greater part of the time as an editor of the Icelandic weekly, *Logberg*, of which he had been one of the founders. At the end of that period he returned to Iceland, and was associated, in an editorial capacity, with various Icelandic publications until 1906. Since then he has devoted most of his time to literary work, for which he receives an annual stipend from the Icelandic government. From the time of his return to his native land in 1895, Kvaran has made his home there, except for periodic visits to other countries. Thus he spent the winter of 1896-97 at Ajaccio in Corsica for his health. In 1907 and again in 1924-25 he re-visited America and lectured extensively throughout the Icelandic communities both in Canada and the United States. Through these visits, and even

more through his literary labors during his earlier residence in Canada, Kvaran has made a notable contribution to the cultural life of the Icelandic-Americans and strengthened the bonds which link them with Iceland.

Nevertheless, great and in many respects beneficial as has been Kvaran's influence on his countrymen in America, naturally his influence upon the life and the thought of his fellow Icelanders at home has been vastly greater. When the cultural history of Iceland for the last fifty years is written, it will be seen that Einar H. Kvaran has played a more important role than most of his Icelandic contemporaries.

He has touched the life of his people at many points. His activity in the field of journalism is of special significance. As an editor of leading Icelandic publications, in America and Iceland, for a period of twenty years he has dealt in some degree with most of the important questions of the day. Ever interested in public affairs, he took for years an active and prominent part in Icelandic politics. As a result he has, of course, reaped his share of abuse and enmity; any fair-minded student of his career will, however, admit that his considerations of public questions have frequently been both wise and fruitful. Again, whether sharing his views or not, few will deny that his numerous articles on varied subjects, in papers and periodicals, as a rule reveal the literary artist. Nor have those miscellaneous productions of his fallen on deaf ears.

Kvaran is a genuine lover of human kind; therefore, it is not at all surprising to find that he is a good deal of a reformer. He loves humanity well enough, and has sufficient faith in its inherent possibilities, to be willing to work for its betterment He has labored diligently for the moral elevation of his countrymen, in particular in the cause of temperance. For many years he has been a highly useful member of the Icelandic branch of the International Order of Good Templars. And his influence in this field has been felt beyond the boundaries of Iceland; for he has on many occasions represented Icelandic Good Templars at international meetings, and he has lectured on temperance questions both in the Scandinavian countries and in England.

Even more significant and more far reaching, at least in Iceland, has been Kvaran's labor in the interest of spiritualism. Since about 1900 he has been vitally concerned with the question of life after death and with psychic research generally. In this work he has been a pioneer among his countrymen. He has

published a great number of articles and several books, original or translated, dealing with spiritualism and lectured on that subject throughout the length and breadth of Iceland. In 1918 he was one of the founders of the Icelandic Society for Psychic Research and became its first president, a position which he still holds. Furthermore, he has been the editor of *Morgunn* (Morning), the official organ of Icelandic spiritualists, since its establishment in 1920.

Ever since his student days Kvaran has been interested in the theatre, in plays, and in theatrical people. For a number of years he was closely associated with the activities of the Dramatic Society of Reykjavik, acting for a considerable length of time as its adviser. During that period he wrote two of his dramas: *Ljenhardur fogeti* (Governor Lenhard) and *Syndir annara* (The Sins of Others).

Without underestimating the cultural significance of Kvaran's work in many fields, it is safe to predict that he will longest be remembered as a writer of fiction. This statement is made with full recognition of the fact that he has written works of merit in the other branches of literature. He began his literary career a little more than half a century ago, as one of a group of four Icelandic students in Copenhagen, who founded the periodical *Verdandi* in 1882. These young writers had come under the influence of Georg Brandes, and through their organ made themselves the champions of realism in the literature of their country. To this publication Kvaran contributed a short story, which drew attention to him, although it is an immature piece of work and far from faultless. Much more significant is the story *Vonir* (Hopes), written in 1888, during the author's residence in Winnipeg, published two years later. Here Kvaran appears as a full-fledged literary artist who fathoms the depths of the human soul and has a firm grip on his material. This story still remains one of its writer's finest works, equally admirable in plot, characterization, and style. At the same time it is but one of many exquisite short stories with which Kvaran has enriched Icelandic literature. Four collections of these have been published: *Vestan hafs og austan* (West and East of the Ocean, 1901); *Smaelingjar* (The Insignificant, 1908); *Fra ymsum hlidum* (From Various Viewpoints, 1913); and *Sveitasogur* (Rural Stories, 1923); some of these have been printed more than once, a certain proof of their wide appeal. This is fortunate, for Kvaran's hand is never surer, the touch never more delicate, than in his

short stories, not a few of which are veritable masterpieces of finished art. He is a master of the single situation. With one flash of insight and understanding he can illumine a whole life destiny. Thus some of his most admirable short stories: *Fyrirgefning* (Forgiveness), *Thurkur* (A Dry Spell), *Skilnadur* (Parting), all included in the collection *Smaelingjar*, are vivid, unforgettable pictures from life, revealing the deep significance of what to the average person would be mere trifling circumstances. Kvaran's novels have, however, won for him a still larger circle of readers than have his short stories, masterful as are the latter. His first long novel *Ofurefli* (The Unconquerable), appeared in 1908; its sequel *Gull* (Gold) followed in 1911. He has written five others, listed here in the order of their appearance. *Salin vaknar* (The Soul Awakens, 1916); *Sambyli* (House-Mates, 1918); *Sogur Rannveigar* (Rannveig's Stories), I-II, 1919 and 1922 respectively, and *Gaefumadur* (The Fortunate Man, 1933).

These novels deal primarily with life in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, during the first two decades of the present century. They are graphic and truthful pictures of society, but still more they are profound psychological studies. As indicated before, Kvaran was at first a follower of Brandes—a thorough-going realist, one might even say a naturalist. And to this day he remains a realist in the treatment of his themes, his literary method. His philosophy of life, as it appears in his mature works, is on the other hand the very antithesis of the materialism and the scepticism commonly associated with realism in literature. He places the emphasis on spiritual values. In his later novels particularly, as well as in some of his short stories, his interest in spiritualism is a dominant note. Eminent Icelandic literary critics have, as a matter of fact, severely criticized Kvaran's later works for savouring too much of spiritualistic propaganda. Nor can it well be denied that the author's special views are, in particular in his most recent books, so much in evidence that the art of the novelist suffers.

At the same time let it be stressed that Kvaran's novels—in special *Ofurefli*, *Gull*, and *Salin vaknar*—are marked by many great literary qualities. The author's skill in story telling is seldom absent. He often excels in character-delineation. His books present a whole gallery of flesh-and-blood creatures. Neither is his style, always pleasing, the least attractive feature of his later works. It is fluent and mellow, at times good naturedly humorous, but not particularly virile or colorful. Perhaps its

greatest quality is its sincerity; as a rule Kvaran succeeds in giving to his narrative the impression of living reality.

As Kvaran's novels and short stories constitute his major literary production, his view of life is most fully expressed in these. Attention has been called to his deep interest in the question of life after death. This interest (as pointed out by an Icelandic critic, Dr. Gudmundur Finnbogason), doubtless has its roots in Kvaran's keen sense of the value of the individual human soul. To him every human creature, regardless of its rank in the hall of society, is of inestimable value. He believes that there are latent seeds of goodness and spiritual greatness in every human soul, which, if exposed to the warm sunshine of love, will bud into fragrant flowers. Hence, as a writer, Kvaran is primarily interested in character, in portraying the moral and spiritual struggles of his fellowmen. His portrayal is marked by never-failing understanding and sympathy. "To understand all is to forgive all" might justly be said to be his watchword. He delights in writing about the step-children of life, the neglected, the outcasts of society. And many of his stories of these and of their tragedies, are among his most masterful works.

To summarize: Kvaran's works of fiction are generally characterized by a broad understanding, rich humanity, and a fundamental belief in the inherent goodness of man.

This is equally true of his dramas, although, in literary artistry, they are inferior to his best short stories. *Governor Lenhard* (1913) will be considered in some detail below. *Syndir annara* (1915) is a social drama, but even in a larger degree a character-study. Two opposite types of men, two views of life, are here effectively contrasted. To be sure the play also deals with the political questions of the hour; in the light of these questions the principal characters become, however, more vivid, more memorable. *Hallstein og Dora* (Hallstein and Dora, 1931)—is like *Syndir annara* a drama of modern life; again the main interest is in the characters and their fate. The author penetrates to the main springs of their conduct; hence the play is highly thought-provoking. Both the plays considered are well constructed, impressive on the stage; and they have won great favor with Icelandic theatre-goers.

Kvaran's versatility is further seen in his lyric poems. A small volume of these was published in 1893. Here are several beautiful and splendidly wrought poems, where wealth of thought and artistry of form go hand in hand.

Lastly, Kvaran has also rendered his nation a cultural service with his translations into Icelandic, which include Macaulay's *Warren Hastings*, parts of V. Hugo's *Les Miserables*, Gunnar Gunnarsson's *The Shore of Life* (Livets Strand), selections from Ruskin, and Tennyson's *Rizpah*.

A somewhat fuller consideration of *Governor Lenhard* is now in place. This is the only one of Kvaran's works which is historical in subject matter. The scene is laid in Iceland at the beginning of the 16th century. The plot centers primarily about the political conflict of the period, the struggle between patriotic Icelanders and the despotic Danish governor, although in the hands of Kvaran the play has become even more a psychological than a historical drama. Doubtless, the choice of the theme reflects the author's state of mind when the play was written. At the time he was in the thick of the political fight in Iceland and the target of many a sharp thrust.

Information which Kvaran has furnished the writer of this article in a letter dated July 4, 1932. throws an interesting light on the genesis of the play. He relates that he had been writing a novel which was to have the title *Hofdingjar* (Chieftains). It was to deal with the "triangle of authority" which is referred to in the play. When the writing of the novel was well advanced, it seemed to Kvaran that a part of it would be a suitable subject for a drama, to the writing of which he turned at once. The result was *Governor Lenhard*. The novel in question has, however, never been completed.

For the subject matter of *Governor Lenhard* the author had but meagre historical information to draw upon, a mere skeleton; hence he had to use his imagination and insight liberally. From Icelandic sources we know that Governor Lenhard held that office during the first years of the 16th century, and that he abused his subjects in an unheard of manner, seizing their property and committing other ruthless outrages upon them. Further, we know that Sheriff Torfi, a strong-minded, liberty-loving individual, led the opposition against Lenhard and brought about his destruction. Lastly, history records that Eystein, a youth of unusual strength and courage, had joined Lenhard and single-handed defended him so bravely against his enemies, that his feat became famed in tradition. Out of this scant material Kvaran has built an impressive, although not a flawless drama.

The first act, intended of course primarily as an introduction, is technically rather weak; it is too long drawn out and does not

deeply move the reader. With the rising action the dramatist has a surer grip on his material; the second, third, and fourth acts are generally speaking carefully wrought and successful dramatically; the action is swift and strong; the reader is carried along on the surge of stirring events. The description of the meeting at Klofi, in Act II, is both realistic and effective. Most masterful, however, poetic and dramatic alike, is the vigorous and penetrating account of the struggle between Lenhard and Gudny (the greater part of Act III). Kvaran's mastery of the dialogue and his understanding of the heart of man are here frequently combined. The last act does not have the concentration nor the finished workmanship of the three acts leading up to it. Nevertheless, it is not an unrelated epilogue; it is the calm after the storm. The happy ending is, moreover, foreshadowed in the preceding action.

All things considered, *Governor Lenhard* is a drama well suited to the stage. It is for the most part pictured against an impressive background, the beautiful and unusual Icelandic scenery. In theme it is vigorous, rich in dramatic situations. In structure it is straightforward, not involving too frequent nor troublesome changes of scenes. As a result *Governor Lenhard* has proved to be one of the most popular plays of the Icelandic stage, where it has been performed season after season, always a great favorite with the theatre-going public. Hence it was most appropriate that this play should be selected by the Dramatic Society of Reykjavik for a special performance in honor of the seventieth birthday of its author.

In conclusion, a word about the translator of *Governor Lenhard* into English, Mrs. Jakobina Johnson. She came with her parents from Iceland to Canada at the age of six. She was educated in the public schools of Manitoba; she now makes her home in Seattle, Washington. She is widely known for her numerous and excellent translations into English from Icelandic poetry; these have appeared in the Icelandic weeklies in Canada and in many American magazines. Over twenty of them are included in the volume *Icelandic Lyrics* (Thorhallur Bjarnarson, Reykjavik, 1930). Mrs. Johnson is also an unusually gifted lyric poet in the Icelandic tongue, and a large number of her original poems have been published in Canadian-Icelandic papers and periodicals as well as in publications of her native Iceland.

LEAVES FROM A LESSON-BOOK

By Althea Bass

I

Courteous reader, out of that great book
That is appointed for us all to read,
From the first page whereon we undertook
Life's *a* and *b* and *c* of code and creed
To lessons grown so hard they vex and tease
Minds that for very weariness are numbed
With puzzling out their deep perplexities,—
I bring you these few pages, worn and thumbed.
If, eyes on beauty, your feet fall in mud,
If wonder is your food and zest your drink,
If pity stirs the courses of your blood,
These sonnets must be meant for you, I think.
But if expediency fathered you,
Your waste-basket or a quick fire will do.

II

Instruct the moon, the lovely lady moon
That goes in silver garments through the skies
And while she walks discovers, late or soon,
All of night's sweetest, subtlest secrecies,—
Instruct her for to-night to veil her glance,
Catch up a whitely flying veil of cloud
And wear it with high wisdom's nonchalance,
Or walk with downcast eyes, discreetly bowed.
She has known mortal love like yours and mine;
She, spied on by the gods, will not prove spy,
And for her own love's sake she will resign
Her brightness on this night when you and I
First lie together. Tell Endymion's bride.
She will go veiled, that love be satisfied.

III

Of strange things, one may witness none more strange
Than that a maiden and a man who meet,
Clasp hands, search each the other's eyes, exchange
The first long kiss of love and find it sweet,

Must needs assume the bondage of those vows
That are the solemn marriage sacrament,
Must swear for love what time soon overthrows
And think forever all too briefly spent.
Two, thus compelled by love, may kneel and pray
To walk together all their lives, then rise
And take in blindness each his separate way
Until they stand with wide, bewildered eyes
Staring across the great space they have gone,
Estranged and dazed and terribly alone.

IV

Power had gone from me, lustre from my eyes,
Strength from my arms, and dancing from my feet;
You from my face had torn its bright disguise;
Song from my throat no longer issued sweet.
Where was the beauty that had dazzled me
With every dawn of every shining day?
Where was the love that had companioned me
And bade me shut all lesser loves away?
He who had been my world and all its light—
Its sun, its moon, its spangled course of stars—
Had turned his countenance and left me night,
Black with despair and strident with strange wars.
Weariness was the pillow for my head
And emptiness the crust on which I fed.

V

Deceive the mind whatever way you will;
Distort stark facts you do not choose to face;
Warm truth till it has lost its power to chill;
Supply reality such saving grace
Out of imagination's boundlessness,
As may conceal its sternness for an hour
And cover its sharp edge with kindliness;
Swear evil must succumb to goodness' power;—
Practice these sweet deceptions if you must,
But never seek to hide the lie you tell,
For in the end the body that you trust
To bear the mind's hard burden will rebel.
Then, broken, it will take to bed and cry
For liberation from the mind's long lie.

VI

How shall I come to terms with treacherous time?
I have thumbed through the lesson-book again
And yet again in search of rule or rhyme,
Fixed law or incantation to explain
How the event belies its prophecy,
Why certainty may choose to give the wink
To chance, or by what perverse chemistry
The sweet essential blends a bitter drink.
Being of trustful mind, I thought to employ
My gifts and time's in covenant. I said,
"Here's love for love; here's a song, give me joy;
Here's faith, give trust; here's effort for my bread."
Time took them all and said, "It is agreed,"
Then, while I waited, filled my hands with need.

VII

This to unlearn, that I so sweetly learned
When he discovered me my aptitude
And gave me tutelage and, teaching, burned
My heart with knowledge better not reviewed:
How this room was illumined when he came,
How fast his kisses fell on my glad face,
How, speaking it, he glorified my name,
How my blood leaped my veins at his embrace,—
This to unlearn, whatever way I must,
But mostly by those long nights when I lie
Alone, entreating sleeplessness to dust
Oblivion's book and open it, that I
May search it page by page until I find
Some way to blot love's memory from the mind.

VIII

We read that day out of the selfsame book
Of music; it lay open on our knees
Before us, and our eyes that dared not look
Into each other's lest they meet and freeze
In an embrace of understanding such
As we denied our bodies, watched each note
Run past, eluding permanency's touch,
To join that sea wherein we were afloat

Like golden swimmers in a golden flood
That bore us on. Within that hour we knew
All knowledge; then it ended, and we stood
Watching the sea of sound as it withdrew—
Two naked souls there on the shining sands,
Clutching a book of music in our hands.

IX

"Trouble the desolated heart no more,
My dear. Let peace have habitation here
Forevermore. The lintel of this door
That we have opened out of pride and fear
And all the carping blame of puny brains
And wagging heads bears the deep-chiseled sign
Of our belief in what we are. The chains
We have struck off lie rusting, while the whine
Of gossip's dogs dies in the vital air
Upon the threshold of this sanctuary.
Having put off the old, approved warfare
Against our own integrity, we carry
Ourselves like gods that walk a new-made earth."
This you have said, and I accept its worth.

X

Do you remember when we went to walk
The green miles of a winding English lane,
And watched a shepherd drive his woolly flock
Down to the village through a silver rain?
The lambs, we thought, looked up in wonderment,
As lambs have looked since that night when our Lord
Was manger-born beside them, being sent
For shepherd-folk and us. (So says the Word.)
Remembering that day of loveliness,
The rain-washed lane, the shepherd and his sheep,
I think how hardly any of us guess
The long way we must go before we sleep:
Lambs to the fair, Our Lord to Calvary,
And what strange road ahead for you and me?

XI

"I call this world the vale of soul-making."
This, from a letter John Keats wrote, I read,
And knew, because of my own heart's aching,
What hard-learned truth informed the words he said,
For I, like Keats, had had stern tutelage
In all I knew of beauty and of love,
And my reward for mastering each page
Out of the lesson-book was, "Wait! Improve!"
You, in your wisdom, dare not pity Keats;
Dare not, then, any more to pity me,
For we have learned the lesson that completes,
He in his greater, I in less, degree.
What if my teaching has been dearly paid?
I know at what white heat a soul is made.

XII

I do not bring you innocency's bloom
Bright in my eyes and glowing on my cheek.
My heart is not a virginal, white room
Whereto you knock for entrance, for I speak
Response without first love's shy hesitance,
Kiss you glad welcome, bid you come inside
And close the door and find deliverance
Within mine arms, where love displaces pride.
I gave away my first frail bloom of spring;
I gave away my white virginity;
And now I give you, for your cherishing,
The summer flower of my maturity.
One full-blown flower is all I have to give;
Refresh it with your love, that it may live.

XIII

What could I do, that day of cold, slow rain
And wind that bent the elm trees' dripping boughs,
But stir the dying embers and complain
How spring repudiates the pledge she vows?
Had she not called the sleeping crocuses
And sent the swallow north and bade birds sing?
I cursed her vacillating purposes

And yet desired her beyond any thing.
Then came your note from Portofino: "See,
Above the bay all Italy's a-bloom—
Camellia, almond, iris, cherry-tree,
Mimosa, rose, giant geranium."
A quick step crossed my room; I never knew
Whether it was the spring that came, or you.

XIV

If we have not had first love's ecstasy
To burn us, soul and body, with quick fire,
We have had lesser gifts abundantly,
For we have heard a great cathedral choir
With one voice lift the *Kyrie*, watched the sun
Sink splendidly, tramped across sodden fields
To reach an inn and read *Endymion*,
Laughed with the understanding friendship yields
Out of such fabric let us build love's house
Close to the ground, framed with these sturdy beams
That do not promise splendor or espouse
The high pretensions that unwisdom dreams.
Ask only that its broad hearth may be warm
And its low roof a shelter from the storm.

XV

Come you within, dear love, and close the door
And light the candles, for the day has spent
The last gold coin of all its generous store
And gone its way into the west, where went
Those other days before love bade us watch
With what grave kindliness night comes to draw
The curtains of this room and fix the latch
And stir the fire, by old, well-ordered law.
Sit in the hushed place night has made us here
And listen for the nocturne that proceeds
Out of far stillness, for that wakened ear
Within the mind, beyond the senses' needs,—
Song without words, such music as requires
Two quiet hearts and silence for its choirs.

XVI

The things that I have known and seen and heard
Surpass all telling: how first violets flower
Beneath a snow-bank, how a mocking-bird
Sings songs he never learned, how fire and power
Become a symphony for Beethoven,
How in a few lines Shelley's *West Wind* moves,
How Greco's canvas paints the souls of men,
And in how many ways a woman loves.
Though I shall live a century of years,
Each multiplied to its allotted days,
Till I am wearied out and my end nears
To snuff the final flame of my amaze,
I shall go down with wonder in my eyes
At life's unending strangeness and surprise.

XVII

Now I have made my peace with time. I know
(Have I not learned it at the cost of tears
And of that hurt too deep for sorrow's show?)
Nothing repudiates the long, slow years.
Time brings no trinkets to the market-place
To trade for precious baubles, or dispute
And juggle values she may soon efface.
Her terms of covenant are absolute.
The first poor gift time gave me I named need,
And loss I named her next apportionment.
Now in the book wherein I search I read
That loss is gain and need is nourishment.
Here endeth one more lesson. What's to learn
On the full pages I have yet to turn?

UNFAMILIAR QUOTATIONS

Life is a comedy to those who think and a tragedy to those who feel.—*Horace Walpole.*

It may be said that vices, like the inns where we must sleep, await us along the road of life; and I doubt whether, should we travel the same road twice, experience would teach us to avoid them.—*LaRochefoucauld.*

I have sought everywhere for peace, but I have found it not, save in a little work, and in a little book.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

SQUARING THE FAMILY CIRCLE

BY DONALD MacCAMPBELL

THE PEOPLE { FREDERIC, EMMA, IONA, A BUTLER

THE SCENE: *Reception-room of* FREDERIC'S *apartment in New York. It is early evening, and as the curtain rises* FREDERIC *is reading on a divan in front of the fireplace, at stage left. There is a large door-way at stage right. At the back of the room there are three windows, one of which is partly concealed by a Japanese screen.*

Presently the butler enters to announce the arrival of a lady. It is EMMA, *a tall, slender blonde.* FREDERIC, *likewise tall and slender, but of very dark complexion, rises and crosses the room to greet her.*

EMMA (*throwing herself in his arms*). Darling!

FRED (*after a cold embrace*). Emma, haven't I asked you not to come here?

EMMA (*holding him off at arm's length to examine his face carefully*). Oh, but dearest!

FRED (*pacing the room*). I won't have it. It's too dangerous!

EMMA. I don't care. You *must* let me see you. It's been ages!

FRED (*impatiently*). But I thought I told you last time how things stood.

EMMA (*with disappointment*). Then you haven't changed?

FRED. Not in the slightest!

EMMA. I thought possibly after all these weeks—

FRED. Things are still the same.

EMMA (*sadly*). I see.

FRED. You're really only wasting your time, Emma.

EMMA (*pouting*). But you know how I love you! You know how impossible it is for me to get along without you . . .

FRED (*sighing*). Do we have to go through all this again?

EMMA. You know I've risked *everything* for you! Cheapened myself, humiliated myself! Would I be here now if—

FRED (*impatiently*). Yes, I know.

EMMA. You simply *must* listen to me!

FRED (*sitting on edge of divan*). But haven't I heard it all? Must we keep going over the same old ground?

EMMA (*crossing to divan and putting her hand on his shoulder*). I wonder if you'd be so callous, dear, if you could see inside me—could feel for yourself that terrible gnawing—that burning hunger for someone who—

FRED. You'll get over it!

EMMA (*shaking her head sadly*). How she has changed you!

FRED. Only whatever you do, you must not come to this apartment. Surely you don't want your daughter to know!

EMMA. Know?

FRED (*gravely*). Suppose she were even to suspect!

EMMA. Oh, is *that* what's worrying you?

FRED. Naturally! (*Pause.*) I've been telling you for a good many months now that our affair has ended. You must know pretty well by this time how I feel about Iona. Besides, I simply can't have her see what sort of woman her mother is!

EMMA. You never used to think I was so bad.

FRED. Perhaps not. But can't you understand that such things end? Must you take it for granted that they go on and on forever? (*Pause.*) Before I met Iona, I'll admit, it was all quite different . . .

EMMA. How beautifully you arrange it with your conscience, Frederic!

FRED. I've told you repeatedly that I have no conscience.

EMMA. You seem to have no heart!

FRED. If it suits your fancy, I have neither heart nor conscience. How's that!

EMMA (*bitterly*). Splendid! Quite dramatic!

FRED. At any rate, it's all over. And if you have a spark of decency Iona will never know. You must leave here this evening for the last time.

EMMA (*seating herself in armchair near divan*). But there's really no place for me to go. You know that. You *can't* cast me out on the street!

FRED. You might try living a normal life for a change . . .

EMMA. You're unkind! Night after night I think of you—long to have you near me again. There are so many memories . . .

FRED. Forget them.

EMMA. It isn't so easy to forget things.

FRED (*impatiently*). Iona is coming here this evening—in fact, any minute . . .

EMMA. Really?

FRED. Or did you decide you'd come first and try to take me away from her?

EMMA (*shaking her head*). How you do admire me!

FRED. Suppose she were to know that you'd been my mistress.

EMMA. You have such a pretty way of putting things, Frederic.

FRED. Even so. Suppose she were to know.

EMMA. Is it such a crime to fall in love with a man?

FRED. The past is gone, Emma. Two weeks from today Iona is going to marry me. If you only knew how much it all means to me, to her—how much she is looking forward to that day, that hour, when—

EMMA. Yes, I know.

FRED. You've really no idea what this all means.

EMMA. Oh, yes, I have.

FRED. Then why—?

EMMA. Only I do wish you weren't so cocksure about things.

FRED. What do you mean by that?

EMMA (*lighting a cigarette*). You know very well what I mean.

FRED (*irritated*). I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I don't.

EMMA (*inhaling*). One mustn't be too cocksure about how much a person loves one . . .

FRED. Oh.

EMMA. Besides, Iona's only a child. There are bound to be other men as attractive as you . . .

FRED. Really?

EMMA. And you certainly wouldn't look pretty with horns, darling.

FRED (*laughing scornfully*). Ho! So that's it! So that's your little game, is it?

EMMA. It's no game at all, dear.

FRED (*irritated*). And you came here to tell me this?

EMMA. Of course I didn't! You know why I came here this evening. I love you. I was desperate. I had to see you. I thought possibly after all these weeks you might have changed your mind—might have realized how unjust, how cruel you were being . . .

FRED. And now that you find I haven't changed my mind you're determined to make one last desperate attempt to turn me against your daughter. Is that it?

EMMA. Certainly not!

FRED (*facing the fireplace*). You're trying to poison me against her!

EMMA. Nothing of the kind.

FRED. Then what—?

EMMA (*inhaling slowly*). Anything I say is only for your sake, Frederic.

FRED (*turning*). You must know how all this affects me!

EMMA (*rising and putting arm around his waist*). But, dear!

FRED (*removing arm*). If only you would please go and leave me alone. She will be here any minute, I tell you! Do you think I want her to see you here in my apartment?

EMMA (*sitting down*). So you think I'm playing a game with you.

FRED. If you are, it won't get you very far.

EMMA. You think my daughter is mad about you.

FRED. I'm convinced she loves me. Now will you go?

EMMA (*biting her lip*). Oh, you're so stupid! I've a great mind to tell you the truth myself! Just to let you see what a fool you are!

FRED. You needn't trouble, Emma. I think we fully understand each other as it is.

EMMA. Must I tell you in so many words? I, her mother?

FRED. I'm glad, at least, that you haven't quite forgotten who you are.

EMMA (*rising*). All right, then. I *will* tell you! Despite everything, I *will!* I simply won't sit back and be treated like this!

FRED. Please don't bother, Emma. It's much more important that you get out of here this instant . . .

EMMA (*with excitement*). I simply won't let her make a fool of you! You want to know the truth? All right, I'll tell you! Iona loves you only *for your money!* Do you hear that? *For your money!*

FRED (*angrily*). A rotten, cowardly lie! God Almighty! And from her own mother, too! Will you please get out of here?

EMMA (*hysterically*). It's true! I didn't intend to tell you, but it's true!

FRED. Emma!

EMMA. *For your money!* Do you hear?

FRED. Oh, Emma! Suppose she were to come in suddenly and hear you say that! In my apartment!

EMMA (*more calmly*). You still don't believe me?

FRED. Will you please go?

EMMA (*gingerly*). All right then, ask *her*.

FRED. Don't be ridiculous!

EMMA. Ask *her* if it isn't true.

FRED. And say that her own mother told me?

EMMA. Heavens no! Use your head, Frederic. Don't mention me. Just tell her you've lost your money over night. It can happen, you know. Tell her you lost it in the market. It will be very simple . . .

FRED (*angrily*). Do you think I'm absolutely mad that you should talk to me like this?

EMMA. Well after all, if you're so sure you might at least ask her—in a subtle way, I mean. It would *have* to be put in a subtle way.

FRED (*scornfully*). I should think very likely it would!

EMMA. Won't you do that one thing for me, darling?

FRED. And what, may I ask, do you expect to get out of it?

EMMA. Oh, a little satisfaction.

FRED. A little satisfaction! Doesn't it occur to you that if I trust your daughter that's all that matters? I think I'm perfectly capable of judging people for myself . . .

EMMA (*doggedly*). But if you put it to her subtly, Frederic, so that she doesn't suspect that I—I mean, that you are suspicious—

FRED. I'm *not* suspicious!

EMMA. Even so, what harm can it do?

FRED (*studying her carefully*). Do you think I don't see through your game?

EMMA. Oh, darling, you *must* believe me! Can't you see that it's only because I love you? Because I just can't sit back and have Iona make a fool of you?

FRED. But even if you do suspect such a thing, why are you just telling me now?

EMMA (*hopefully*). Why? Because I didn't want to hurt you unless it was necessary. I thought, no matter what you said, I could still win you back in the end. But when I came here tonight and found that you hadn't changed—that—that I had

really lost out—I—I just couldn't let her make a fool of you! I *had* to tell you!

FRED (*after a long pause*). Suppose I were to give you this—this satisfaction, as you call it. Suppose I were to test her. Would you believe me when I told you what she said?

EMMA. Oh, every word, Frederic. I love you too much *ever* to doubt you. You *know* it!

FRED (*after another pause*). Very well, then, I'll do it. I suppose you will never give me any peace until I satisfy you. Now will you be good enough to go?

EMMA (*arranging her hat*). And if she confesses? Will you take me back?

FRED (*with great irritation*). Oh, come! Please! Let's drop it!

EMMA (*endeavoring to embrace him*). Will you, Frederic? Will you take me back?

FRED (*stepping away*). Please! Please! (*The butler announces* IONA, *whose steps are heard in the hall.* FREDERIC *is in a frenzy. The only possible hiding-place is behind the screen at the back of the room: placed there to conceal a cabinet upon which stand glasses and liquors.* EMMA *is hurried to this spot.*) Good God! Here's Iona! If she were to know it would kill her! You'll have to stay here now! And do be quiet! I'll try to get her into the study . . . (FREDERIC *returns quickly to the center of the room and tries to compose himself.* IONA *enters and, like her mother, immediately throws her slender arms around his neck. She is smaller than* EMMA, *very fair of complexion, and exceedingly beautiful.*) Iona, dearest!

FRED (*holding her tight*). My own!

IONA. Thought I'd come over a few minutes early—just so I could have a little longer to be with you . . .

FRED. I'm sorry I'm not dressed. I—

IONA (*pulling his ear playfully*). Shush! What does it matter! There's no hurry. Dinner's not till eight-thirty, you know.

FRED. That's so. (*Nervously.*) We've plenty of time, haven't we.

IONA (*pulling him across to divan*). What *is* wrong with the fire, dear? Frightfully cold in here!

FRED. Is it really?

IONA. You sit down. I'm going to get me a drink. I'm *frozen*!

FRED (*holding her*). No you won't. Sit down yourself. I'll get you one.

IONA (*sitting down casually*). Very well, dearest. Just as you say.

FRED (*starting back toward screen*). What'll it be?

IONA. Oh, anything.

FRED. Whiskey? Sherry? Cocktail?

IONA. Sherry, if you don't mind.

FRED (*disappearing behind screen*). Good.

IONA (*rising and going over to fireplace*). Been all alone?

FRED (*from behind screen*). Yes. (*Pause.*) Why do you ask?

IONA. I dunno. (*Hums a bit*). Really dear, it's frigid in this room. I'm going to see what I can do with this fire. (*Starts poking around among the embers.*)

FRED. Why don't we go into the study? Eric has built a splendid fire in there, dear.

IONA. Oh, this will be all right in a minute. Just needs poking a bit. (*Puts on a piece of wood.*) I love to play with fires . . .

FRED. Women all love to play with fire, dear.

IONA (*casually*). Yes, I suppose so.

FRED. But I'm sure we'd find it much more comfortable in the study.

IONA. Really, this will be all right in a minute. Only haven't you been awfully cold sitting here, darling?

FRED (*still behind the screen*). Cold? Why, no. As a matter of fact, I've been rather warm.

IONA. What doing? (*Returns to divan and sits down.*)

FRED (*a bit startled*). What? Oh, uh, reading. Reading as usual.

IONA. Been having a pleasant time? (FREDERIC *comes forward with tray and places it upon smoking cabinet. He is whistling with studied nonchalance.*)

FRED (*handing her a glass*). Not particularly.

IONA (*sipping*). Bored?

FRED (*sipping*). Yes, quite!

IONA. I love your sherry, dear!

FRED. You do?

IONA. I'll say! Tastes like the sherry we had last summer in Barcelona. Remember? Wasn't it at Tony's?

FRED. I believe so, yes.

IONA. Poor Tony! (*Sips.*) I wonder what ever has become of him since he married that dreadful woman . . .

FRED (*watching her carefully*). Getting fatter and more stupid, I suppose.

IONA (*laughing*). I suppose.

FRED (*sipping*). Still, she has money . . .

IONA (*sipping*). Tony was such good fun, too.

FRED (*after a pause*). That reminds me!

IONA (*a little startled*). Of what, darling?

FRED. You know what happens two weeks from today?

IONA (*with interest*). No, tell me. (*Pause.*) Oh, but of course! Of *course!* How too utterly stupid of me. Our wedding!

FRED (*in an injured tone*). Yes. But I don't see how even for a moment you could forget . . .

IONA. I'm terribly sorry. I just hadn't stopped to think. Time flies so quickly. It's almost impossible—

FRED. I suppose it is.

IONA (*tenderly*). I'm sorry, dear. You must forgive me. You see, I've been so horribly busy these days with my music and all . . .

FRED. Yes, I know.

IONA. Guess what! I'm beginning counterpoint, Fred.

FRED. You are, really?

IONA. It does take so much time . . .

FRED. I know. It's dull, isn't it. (*Studying her carefully.*)

IONA. Oh, I wouldn't say that it was dull, dear. I mean, it doesn't exactly bore me . . .

FRED (*sitting down beside her*). Poor busy little girl! Do you suppose we're going to be able to find enough time for the wedding?

IONA. Don't be absurd, Frederic! Of course!

FRED. Well, I'm glad of that.

IONA. You silly! (*Kisses him.*)

FRED (*after a pause*). You know, Iona—

IONA (*coyly*). What, dearest.

FRED (*rising and setting down glass*). Oh, nothing.

IONA. Tell me.

FRED (*pacing in front of her*). Nothing at all.

IONA (*uneasily*). Anything gone wrong tonight? You seem so dreadfully nervous . . .

FRED (*stopping in front of fireplace*). Only this. Sometimes

I have a feeling that things aren't quite as I imagine them to be . . .

IONA. What things, dear?

FRED (*gingerly*). Sometimes I have a feeling that you don't really love me as much as you want me to think you do.

IONA (*surprised*). Why, Frederic!

FRED. I know, but you don't really, do you?

IONA. Frederic!

FRED. You don't really want to marry me.

IONA. Frederic!

FRED. Well, you haven't denied it, have you?

IONA. But of course, darling, I love you. Of course I want to marry you. Don't be so silly. (*She sets down her glass.*)

FRED (*despondently*). I'm not so sure . . .

IONA (*calmly*). Fred, dearest, how can you doubt me? You know you mean the world to me. What *can* be the matter with you tonight? (*After a moment's silence,* IONA *ventures to turn the pages of a magazine which has been lying on the divan beside her. Frederic, seeing an almost mocking disrespect in the gesture, dashes the magazine from her hands.*)

FRED. Stop! For God's sake don't read when I'm talking to you like this! It's—it's postively indecent! I won't stand it!

IONA (*rising in amazement*). Frederic! Are you out of your mind!

FRED (*after a pause in which he regains composure*). I'm sorry. I *am* nervous today. You must excuse me . . .

IONA (*beginning to sob as she resumes her seat*). How *can* you behave like this!

FRED. I'm deathly sorry, really. (*Lays hand gently on her head.*)

IONA. You know I love you!

FRED (*moved*). You really mean it, Iona?

IONA. Mean it! Of course I mean it! I love you! Only you! (*She sobs.*)

FRED. Forgive me, then. I shouldn't have gone off like that. (*Stares at the screen and sighs.*) But I just had to make sure. (*Pause.*) You see, something dreadful has just happened . . . I hesitated to tell you . . .

IONA (*as though electrified*). Dreadful? What's happened? Is it so bad?

FRED (*with another deep sigh*). Yes, very. You see, I'm broke. It's all gone. Everything. *Every penny!*

IONA ! ! !

FRED. Thought I had a sure thing, you know. Borrowed a lot from the banks. And now—busted! Cleaned out! You understand? (*He watches her cautiously.*) Nothing left!

IONA ! ! !

FRED. Now you see why I wanted to be sure it was I you loved—and not my money? Not what I had to give you?

IONA. Oh, Frederic, how perfectly awful!

FRED (*stepping toward her chair and laying an arm upon her shoulder*). But what does it matter now, dear. It will be all right. If you really do love me as you say, we can start over together and come back . . .

IONA (*as though dazed*). Start over . . . come back . . .

FRED. Aren't you willing?

IONA. Oh, but Frederic!

FRED. Well?

IONA (*biting her lip*). What about the house we were planning to build on Long Island? Do you mean—that we can't—

FRED (*shaking his head*). Yes, I'm afraid so. We'll have to stay in the city for a while.

IONA (*anxiously*). Here?

FRED. You mean in the apartment? Lord, no! I'll have to sub-let this place until things begin to look better again . . .

IONA. Oh. (*Pause.*) And there'll be no car, dear?

FRED. Hardly, for a while. I don't see what we could buy it on, now . . .

IONA. How perfectly awful, Fred. You mean we'll have nothing?

FRED (*still watching her carefully*). For a while.

IONA. Oh, Frederic!

FRED. Well?

IONA. I did think we could have certain things . . .

FRED. I know. It's going to be very hard for both of us . . .

IONA (*Pause.*) You mean, I'm not going to have even an allowance, dear?

FRED. It may be possible for me to give you a very small allowance, Iona. (*Pause.*) But look, do these things all mean so very much to you? Home? Car? Spending money? Don't you love me just a little bit for what I am?

IONA (*uneasily*). Of course, darling.

FRED. Well, then. Can't we pull back, together?

IONA (*biting her lip*). I—oh, I don't see how it can be done, Frederic! I—

FRED (*a little bitterly*). So!

IONA. I *did* think we could—

FRED. Well?

IONA. I did think we could have certain things, naturally. I—I had rather expected them . . .

FRED (*growing impatient*). Does that mean that under the circumstances you won't marry me? Is that it?

IONA. Oh, but, Frederic—do you think it right to ask me to marry you now that you're ruined and can't give me anything?

FRED (*walking back and forth before her like a caged tiger*). Ha! So! It *was* the money after all!

IONA (*dejectedly*). If you could only have told me sooner!

FRED. It *was* the money, Iona!

IONA. Of course it wasn't!

FRED (*savagely*). It's a lie! It was the money you wanted, not me! I know it now! (*There is a long pause after which* IONA *rises from her seat.* FREDERIC, *at a distance, surveys her scowlingly.*)

IONA (*defiantly*). Very well, then. You are right. It *was* your money! (*snapping her finger.*) I never cared *that* for you! So help me, it's true! True! You hear? I've never loved you a moment for anything else! (*Her courage falters and she throws herself again in the chair.*) There! You *made* me say it! You *made* me! Now are you happy?

FRED (*crushed*). So, then.

IONA (*staring blankly into the distance*). You may as well know, too, that I've always loved Alex. Always. But when you came along with all your money—

FRED. So!

IONA. Alex is too poor to marry me! He has too much honor to ask to marry a girl he couldn't support!

FRED (*in a tone of disgust*). Alex? Who is Alex?

IONA. My music teacher. I've always loved him! Always!

FRED (*turning away*). It's simply criminal! It's criminal, telling me all this! (*He stares toward the screen.*)

IONA (*appealingly*). But one can't control love! Alex and I are inseparable. I could never love anyone else now. (*Pause.*)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't be telling you these things . . . But don't you see how you forced it all out of me?

FRED (*bitterly*). So you were going to marry me to support your lover, eh? Who is teaching you counterpoint, among other things!

IONA (*moved*). I'm sorry if I've hurt you so . . .

FRED. You—you dirty little cheat! (*Still staring toward screen.*)

IONA (*rises*). I won't sit here and let you insult me!

FRED (*stopping her as she turns to go*). Wait. Listen to me! Can you possibly realize what all this means to me? Can you?

IONA. But—

FRED. The shame. The disgrace . . .

IONA. I'm sorry. You really don't know how—

FRED. The disappointment . . .

IONA (*lowering her head*). I'm so sorry, really.

FRED. Sorry! Perhaps you *will* be sorry at that!

IONA (*looking up quickly*). Just what do you mean?

FRED. You'll see.

IONA ? ? ?

FRED. In the past, I've shielded you because I loved you. I never wanted you to know the truth.

IONA. Frederic, will you tell me what you're driving at?

FRED (*enjoying his advantage*). Oh, there's no hurry. You'll see soon enough, (*There is a slight stir behind the screen.*) You probably won't believe your eyes!

IONA (*sitting on arm of chair*). Well?

FRED. You'll hide your pretty little head in shame!

IONA. Frederic, what is it? (FREDERIC *walks back with slow and measured steps to the screen, folds it slowly, and rests it against the wall.* EMMA *is standing like a statue, her head concealed in her hands.*)

FRED (*with malicious delight*). You see?

IONA (*casually surprised*). Why, mother! *You* here?

FRED. Yes, mother! You see? (EMMA *steps forward, embarrassed, and stands beside her daughter, her head well lowered.*)

IONA. Mother! So *that* explains it! Now I see. God, what a fool!

FRED (*at a distance, hands on hips*). Explains it? Explains what!

EMMA. I—I—

FRED. So!

IONA (*angrily*). Oh, why did you have to tell him, mother! I might have known I could trust you to make a mess of things! (*Shakes* EMMA's *arm, violently.*) Answer me, what did you say to him!

EMMA. I—

FRED. Mess of things? What do you mean, mess of things?

IONA (*turning on* FREDERIC *fiercely*). So you got it out of her after all!

FRED. What do you mean! Will you please explain yourself!

IONA (*rising*). Oh, what's the use. Come on, mother, let's get out of here!

FRED (*standing in front of them*). Oh no you don't! You'll explain first before you leave this room! I demand an explanation!

IONA (*flippantly*). Oh, do you? Well, if you must know, for the past two years mother's been telling me about her little affair with you and—

FRED (*insane with rage*). *What?*

IONA. And I had Alex, so—

FRED. Yes, you've already told me that!

IONA. And she had you, so we decided—

FRED (*pacing the room*). So we decided! Great God in heaven! So we decided!

IONA (*calmly*). So I agreed to let mother have you provided she'd let me marry you. We thought that fair enough . . .

FRED. Fair enough! Are you going to stand there and talk to me like that? Get out, both of you! Get out!

EMMA (*with forlorn courage*). Please, Frederic! Forgive me, dear! Everything will work out all right. We can still love . . .

FRED (*turning his back in sardonic laughter*). Love! Love! How priceless!

EMMA (*sobbing*). Oh, Frederic!

FRED (*savagely*). Get out!

IONA (*calmly*). Well, that's that. No use getting all steamed up, Fred. Come on, mother, let's go. (IONA, *head high, struts out.* EMMA *departs slowly, sobbing quietly, and stealing a final pitiful glance at her lover.* FREDERIC, *stupefied, sinks down upon the divan, head in hands.*)

FRED (*under his breath*). The bitches!

CURTAIN

EIGHT POEMS

By Alice Very

NEMESIS

Have I not heard her furtive, creeping tread,
Matching my steps more closely day by day?
Has not a whisper caught my throat with dread
"Drink swift, before I dash the cup away!"
In the bright noon a shadow always lay,
Too early drooped the flowers on my head,
For I had seen a god with mortal eye,
And on immortal viands had been fed.

Now she is come, but not with crash of flame,
Nor the still horror of untimely rest,
Almost I wake and find my world the same,
Only the narrow finger at my breast
Draws the slow thread of anguish taut again:
"Die ewige Betrachtung des Gescheh'n."

EVENING

Now that the night is closing down
And birds about my roof are still,
I will remember how the dawn
Came white upon the farthest hill.

I will remember how the stars
Flickered and paled before the sun
And all the many lesser lights
Were merged and magnified in one.

(Only the memory still undimmed
Flows on and on, a quiet stream,
Into a still lake, shadow-rimmed,
The silent world of dream.)

Now it is dark, I still may keep
Some glimmer of the morning light,
To comfort me, till I can sleep,
Now it is night—now it is night.

"THE FAIR ARMOURESS"

I would not scorn to walk the market places
Scattering favors thick as snow that flies
If I could choose the lads with daisy faces
And young, clear eyes.

But all my spring lies buried far below
The drifting snows of many wasted years,
And daisy eyes have better wares to show
Than autumn's tears.

HYMN TO BEAUTY—FOR THE BRASS

Sorrowfully, out of its hollow, distant breathing
Laments the horn this endless dissonance:
All loveliness shall die; it is illusion;
Beauty shall perish.
We have been told of an unearthly music—
Such tones spun out on the tortured violin
That the fine thread drew souls in exquisite madness,
Regenerate from impotence and sin.
We have sought these tones, we have essayed this difficult music,
We have attained a singular degree of purity;
Almost we have blown the bubble of perfect sound;
Then at a breath it shattered in subtle discord,
Tainted with earth, fell to the ground.

It is a lie that misery can make beauty,
That imperfection and decrepitude
Yield supreme good.

Out of our solitude and inward brooding,
Ourselves with strange, inverted faith deluding,
Audibly we project our futile grieving
In empty air—

And to this mirage-miracle of deceiving
We breathe our prayer.

HOKKUS

OCTOBER

Gray smoke, gray sky,
Summer-blue wings departing,
Smoke and the wings flow south.

NOVEMBFR

Month of death,
Of frozen earth and sky.
—Of faith,
And full buds on the twigs.

MARCH

O Sparrow, your voice!
My youth returning,
Singing agony and joy.

APRIL

Miracle! a green leaf—
A baby's crumpled hand.
Well, then, Descartes?

PIERIA

He who would worship at my shrine
Must leave the peace of sacrifice,
He must be mad and talk with men
Only by intricate device.

He must be comrade of the sun,
Dweller in the vacant sky,
Upon the naked sea must run
And wingless on the aether fly:

Learn to unfold with ruthless art
Tenuous fibre, living cell,
To gauge the tempo of the heart
And plumb the brain's exhaustless well.

All the fruits of nature's tree
Are his, to taste—and cast away,
Scenting the ultimate decay
That gnaws at my eternity.

THE WIND

A strange and terrible man
Came to the house last night.
His face like a dream was wan
But his eyes were bright.

He talked of the Wind, the Wind,
The Wind, that no one knows,
He asked us who could find
What it is, or whither it blows.

The wind that follows the mist
Comes back with the slanted rain,
But the wind from the lips we kissed
Will never return again.

Yet he looked on my brother's face
With deep and terrible sighs,
Like wind, love shook the place
And—I saw my brother rise!

VARIATION ON A REMEMBERED THEME

The sun descending in a fragile sky
Silvers the moving poplar trees
That ebb and flow beneath the breeze,
Waterlike, in a rhythmic ecstasy.
Now as the cool, engulfing shadows turn
Green into dusk, and stars prick through the gray,
Suddenly the insistent sights of day
Into the fecund dark again return.

We must be born again, but in what guise,
And shall we know ourselves or seem another?
Or sink into the unfathomed, secret mother?
Can beauty die, be buried, and yet rise?

O night, be silent now; your stars grow dim;
See a new radiance gild earth's turning rim!

"LA TRÈS SAGE HÉLOÏSE"

By Alice Morrill Ruggles

That great women of the past should suffer more from neglect and misrepresentation than do men, is inevitable from the nature of the sexes and their work. The man's fame remains more tangible and clearly defined, the woman's, depending more upon her personality, is apt to become, after her death, a tradition that fades or changes with succeeding generations.

Too often, the peculiar magic by which a woman of genius swayed the world, dies with her, and she becomes merely a name,—a shadowy figure, dim or distorted, according to the fancy of her biographer, or the taste of the times.

No one has suffered more in this respect than Héloïse. History has slighted or ignored her; posterity has misread her story and overlooked her genius. Of the multitudes from all over the world who have visited her tomb at Père Lachaise, a tomb described by Mark Twain as "more revered, more widely known and sung about and wept over, for seven hundred years, than any other in Christendom, save only that of the Saviour," of those visitors, how many have known the true story of Abélard and Héloïse?

Most of them would say that these were medieval lovers, famous for their intellectual gifts and extraordinary misfortunes, but chiefly for their devotion to each other. But the truth is that all the affection in this celebrated affair was on one side—Abélard never cared a straw for Héloïse—he was neither a great character nor a true lover, but a cowardly, vain and selfish man, and in his relations with Héloïse, one of the most cold-blooded libertines on record.

To prove this, one has only to turn to the original sources of information, for Abélard and Héloïse are strictly historical characters. We possess, besides the evidence of contemporaries, a long biographical letter from Abélard to a friend, and nine letters which passed between him and Héloïse after they had separated and entered the cloister.

Contemporary opinion reveals Abélard as a daring thinker and a brilliant orator, but a man heartily disliked by a large part of his world from the beginning of his public life to its end. In the affair with Héloïse he stands convicted out of his own mouth,

by the frank and detailed account of his outrageous behaviour he gives in the famous *Epistle to a Friend*. Aside from his contribution to theology, posterity owes this man nothing but execration. Yet it has persisted in extenuating his baseness and in venerating him equally with Héloïse in the legend which it has substituted for the true story.

This legend is one of a noble passion, transcending and glorifying the sin and suffering of two great souls, who have become, *par excellence*, the typical lovers for all time, more admirable, more pitiable than Paris and Helen, Launcelot and Guinevere, Paolo and Francesca.

That is the legend. The actual story is one of trust abused, youth exploited, inestimable devotion misprized and cast aside. The title of the tale should be, not "Ideal Lovers," but (to adopt the figure of Abélard himself) "The Wolf and the Lamb."

With repulsive coarseness and not one note of tenderness, this thirty-eight year old man of the world describes his seduction of an innocent child of seventeen. Egotism, lust, and ambition were his consuming passions; hers, self-sacrifice and devotion. She gave up for him, home, child, reputation and the world, and counted it nothing, so long as she had his love.

History plays strange tricks with truth, and one of the strangest is that Abélard, the least loving of men, has been consecrated the patron saint of lovers. This can be explained by the fact that his first biographers were ecclesiastics. Naturally the monkish chroniclers were biased in telling the story of an intrigue in which a distinguished churchman had been the transgressor.

And how could they do justice to Héloïse, when for centuries the church had been holding her sex up to scorn and reprobation? Throughout the early Middle Ages, woman had been mentioned in the church chronicles as "*Vas inferiore*." The Crusades, chivalry and the cult of Mary were later to raise her status. But Héloïse, utterly lacking in mysticism, and intellectually and morally bold and self-reliant, suggests rather the great women of Rome's best period than the humble, pious type the medieval churchman was taught to admire.

French history, rich in illustrious women, has produced only one other to compare with Héloïse—Joan of Arc. To strength of mind and executive ability, these two united the single-minded, selfless devotion characteristic of their sex. Both were filled with lofty passion, the one for her country, the other for her lover, and

both were pitiably sacrificed at the age of nineteen by the ungrateful objects of their love.

Joan was burnt at the stake; Héloïse was forced into the living death of the cloister, where for more than forty years she endured the torments of a heart that never ceased to flame.

From the age of twenty to sixty-three, Héloïse lived a nun, stifling her natural inclinations and devoting her talents to the organization and development of her community. Outwardly her struggles were successful. At seventeen she had been called the loveliest and most learned maiden in France. At her death, the convent calendar announced, "On the 17th of May, 1164, emigrated to the Lord, Héloïse, mother and first abbess of this house—in doctrine and in faith most resplendent."

Abélard had died twenty years before, and she had had his body brought to her convent and placed in a large double coffin in the chapel. Tradition has it that when the nuns opened the coffin of Abélard to place the dead abbess within, the master raised his arms to receive her, kissed her and clasped her to his breast. Already a curious superstition was at work to transform, by the glory of Héloïse's love, the worthless character of a selfish lover and cold-hearted husband.

Three centuries after her death, in the days of the "trouvères," and the *Court of Love*, Jehan de Meung sang of Héloïse in his *Roman de la Rose*, and for two centuries more, his verse translations of selections from her letters from Latin into the vernacular, kept the story in the public mind.

In the fifteenth century, François Villon showed his appreciation of a free soul, when he referred in his *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*, to "la très sage Héloïse."

In the next century, a certain lawyer, Etienne Pasquier, in a volume called, *Recherches de la France*, ponderously delivers his opinion in the case of Héloïse. "I am therefore at a loss what judgment of praise or blame I ought to pass against Héloïse. For however much she violated her honor in her relations with him, nevertheless, I am almost persuaded that this was not so much due to licentiousness, on her part, as to the good and great qualities of Abélard. Avoiding all the hypocrisy which women usually assume in such affairs, she freely admitted that her only thought was for him whom she so greatly loved and honored."

In other words, Héloïse (in the opinion of Maitre Etienne) is guilty, but recommended to mercy, because of extenuating circumstances, *viz.*, the virtues of her seducer!

She was to fare worse at the hands of a soldier and man of letters in the time of Louis XIV, Bussy-Rabutin, who treated her affair as "*commerce galant*," and in a translation, or rather imitation, of the letters made her and Abélard converse like the courtiers of Le Grand Monarque. A commentary on the taste of that day is the fact that Madame de Sévigné admired this wretched travesty of truth.

To this period belongs also that brutal fling of the learned Bayle, in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*,—"*Héloise, fille sans honneur.*" The classicists could never comprehend her character, and all through the eighteenth century, the work of desecration went on.

The letters were published in paraphrase, in poor translations and in garbled form. In England, Pope produced his disfigured portrait of *Eloisa* in a poem which had a great vogue. Not until the beginning of the nineteenth century, with its refreshing in-rush of romantic sentiment, did Héloïse begin to come into her own.

Chateaubriand, in his *Genie du Christianisme*, contrasted Héloise with Dido and, as the apologist of Christianity, undertook to prove the superiority of the medieval heroine to the classical on the score of her Christian piety. As a matter of fact, the terrible struggle which racked the soul of Héloïse was not that between love and religion, which Chateaubriand so eloquently describes, but between love and circumstance. She declared implicitly, more than once, that her allegiance was not to God, but to her lover. Abélard ordered her to the cloister, and she obeyed, and she would have followed his command, had it led her to Hell itself. And Héloïse was still medieval enough to believe in a literal Hell.

The first adequate, though abridged, translation of the letters of Héloïse and Abélard was made from the original Latin in 1838 by a Frenchman, M. Oddoul. This was followed a few years later by the complete translation of the bibliophile Paul Jacob, which remains a standard to the present time, together with the scholarly biographical essay by Villenave.

Some of the most learned and brilliant French writers of the nineteenth century took up the story: Michelet, the two Guizots, St. Réné Tallandier, Gréard, recteur de la Sorbonne, and others. Lamartine, in an impassioned essay, saluted Héloïse as the "Sappho of Christianity." Charles de Rémusat, a serious and prudent historian, expressed his belief that she was the "foremost

of women." Victor Cousin called her "that noble creature who loved like St. Theresa, wrote at times like Seneca, and whose attraction must have been irresistible, since she charmed St. Bernard himself."

Biographies of Héloïse in English have been distinctly inadequate. The Rev. Joseph Berington, a broad-minded Roman Catholic, wrote a discursive work on the lovers, in which he confessed himself confounded by this extraordinary woman Héloïse, "whose notions of moral and religious duty" he felt constrained to pronounce "too free."

And an obscure American writer, one O. W. Wight, deserves mention as the first to hail in Héloïse a precursor of the "New Woman." In 1853, in *The Romance of Abélard and Héloïse*, he apostrophizes her in the high-flown style of our grandfathers. "In thy blood there is an inborn heroism that shall defy the malediction of the age and proclaim the good time coming, when the queenly heart of woman shall reign in harmony with the kingly brain of man."

Even in the nineteenth century when the poets and historians had waked to an appreciation of Héloïse, they continued to pass along the legend of Abélard's "perfect love." It remained for Mark Twain to shatter that illusion with wrath and irony. In the *Innocents Abroad*, he briefly relates the true story of the lovers and regrets that he has not time to write four or five volumes of his opinion of "that unprincipled humbug, Pierre Abélard." He suggests a search for the tomb of the ruffians who inflicted the punishment of Abélard and the bestowal upon their graves of the bouquets of immortelles the tourists bring to Père Lachaise.

So far as I know Mark Twain is the only writer in our language who has given Abélard the rating he deserves. But in 1910, a little volume appeared in Paris, the title of which shows clearly the attitude of the author, *Héloise, Amante et Dupe d' Abélard. (La Fin d'une Légende.)*

On the basis of documentary evidence and with sympathy and imagination the author, M. Maurice de Waleffe, has reconstructed the story, "*vrai et vivant*," and disposed once and for all of the legend. He shows Héloïse as an incomparable lover, and Abélard as uncomprehending and unworthy of her devotion.

In English the most recent translation of the letters is that of the late Mr. Scott-Moncrieff. For romance there is the exquisitely written *Héloise and Abélard* of Mr. George Moore. This is a work almost flawless in style and atmosphere, but where

the writer has to interpret doubtful situations or fill in discrepancies, his bias is all towards the old legend of undervaluing Héloïse and excusing Abélard.

For example, he makes Abélard accompany Héloïse on that perilous journey to Brittany before her child was born, and a large part of his novel is taken up with the adventures of the lovers on that trip. But, as Abélard's own letter to a friend shows, he did not go to Brittany with Héloïse but packed her off alone, hastily and secretly, with a complete lack of feeling for her condition.

When later, under threat of assassination from Héloïse's uncle, Abélard was forced to go to Brittany and bring Héloïse back to Paris for a secret marriage, he insisted that she leave her baby behind her with his people. There is no evidence to show that the child was ever restored to her, and it is most unlikely, since she took the veil soon after. But Mr. Moore has the boy living pleasantly with his mother in the convent until, as a half-grown lad, he runs away to the Children's Crusade.

In the incident of Héloïse's first entrance into the convent, and again when she takes the perpetual vows, Mr. Moore gives the initiative to Héloïse, and so absolves Abélard from the blame of sacrificing her young life. But the most unpardonable liberty the novelist takes is to make Héloïse resort to suicide in the cloister, and have her surprised and saved by Abélard just as she is on the point of swallowing poison. This scene, with which the book ends, is utterly out of keeping with the facts and with the character of Héloïse. Has fiction, even in the hands of a master, the right so grossly to misrepresent an historic heroine?

Joan of Arc waited four centuries for canonization, but Héloïse, after seven hundred years, is still waiting for simple justice.

Not by appointment do we meet Delight and Joy;
They heed not our expectancy.
But round some corner in the streets of life
They, on a sudden, clasp us with a smile.

—*Gerald Massey.*

CAPE COD PICTURES

By Helen Freeman Stevens

SALT MARSHES

Somber in the morning,
Shining in the noon,
Like a fairy picture
By the glimmer of the moon!
Blue flag-lilies blowing,
Cat-o'-Nine Tails growing,
Rippling, dancing to and fro
As the breezes come and go.
Purple shades when clouds on high
Sail across a windy sky;
Golden when the day is clear,
Lovely any time of year,
Where's a sight could fairer be
Than Cape Cod Marshes by the sea!

GOD'S ACRES

From up upon the hill-tops,
  From just across the way—
God's Acres in the little towns
  Look out upon the bay.
The pines, a slumber song shall sing,
The oaks, a guardian watch shall keep,
And they who come, shall gently tread,
  That all may sweetly sleep.
A pleasant rest it seems to me,
  Where healing winds blow wide and free!

THE TIGHT-SHUT DOOR

Sagging old door-way, so graceful of line,
  Fashioned with panels so beautifully fine,
You stand, tightly shut, in a little house here,
  Keeping its secrets for year after year,
Constantly fearful, lest you should impart
  The fact that you're hiding a Home's empty heart.

IN MEMORY OF A LITTLE SETTLEMENT CALLED "THE BROOK"

Near the border of the wood
  Once a little hamlet stood,
Little houses clustered 'round
  Little plots of garden ground.
Smoke from little chimneys curled,
  Venturing out into the world,
Fisher-folk with fisher ways
  Busy lives through happy days,
With their slender means content
  Hours from dawn till dusk well spent.

* * * * * *

Years have flown and left behind
  Scarce a trace of any kind.
Gone are house and garden wall,
  Ah, the pathos of it all!
Where stood homes I used to know
  Only clumps of lilacs grow.

THE OVER-GROWN PATH

Sad little pathway that led to the door,
  Trodden by dancing feet in days of yore,
Worn with remembering day after day,
  Under the grasses you've hidden away.

ABANDONED

The saddest things I'll ever see,
  Though I be old and gray,
Are little windows of a house
  Whose folks are gone away!
The little vacant empty stares
  Where once were beams of light,
A gaze that has no life in it
  Like eyes deprived of sight.
And when it rains, oh, dearie me—
  A sorrier sight you could not see!
The rain in trickling down appears
  To be the little windows' tears!

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